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The Princess

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THE PRINCESS

A MEDLEY

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

No poem of Tennyson's has provoked such extremes of opinion as *The Princess.* The present editor, after a somewhat prolonged study of the work, finds himself, as in the beginning, at neither of these extremes. It is his desire, therefore, that this book may afford encouragement to the discriminating student, rather than to the zealously admiring or disparaging critic.

The notes aim to supply only such information as may not be found readily in the ordinary school reference library. The critical comments do not profess to be dicta; the student should take them simply for what they are — personal opinions. The starred notes, it is thought, may be used profitably in connection with a preliminary reading of the poem. As there is at this time no compact and easily accessible biography of Tennyson, the main facts of his life and work have been included in the Introduction to this volume. For further information, the student should be referred, if possible, to Arthur Waugh's *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Study of His Life and Works.* Valuable criticism upon Tennyson and *The Princess* may be found in Stedman's *Victorian Poets,* Van Dyke's *Poetry of Tennyson,* Bagehot's essay

INTRODUCTION.

THE POET.

ALFRED TENNYSON was born on August 6th, 1809, in the rectory of the little Lincolnshire hamlet of Somersby. His father, who held this living in connection with two other small parishes, was notable for his union of scholarly and artistic tastes; his mother, for her sweetness of character. Alfred was one of the older children in a family of twelve, seven of whom were boys. The three whom we associate most closely with him were his two elder brothers, Frederick and Charles, and the sister Emily who was to share his mourning for Hallam. Of these three it was Charles, next in seniority and in sympathy, who meant most to the boy in his early years; it was Charles with whom he studied, and talked, and wrote, and rambled about the lovely Lincolnshire lanes; and it was Charles who halved with him the pains and the profits of his first literary venture.

The two boys began to write verse almost as soon as they could write anything. In his twelfth year Alfred produced an epic of five thousand lines or so, in imitation of Scott, who was then in the height of his vogue; and at fourteen he produced his first drama. Of infinitely more importance than his writing at this period, however, was his eager and intelligent reading. The two local schools, the village school at Holywell Glen and the grammar school at the neighboring town of

Louth, seem to have left little impress on the brothers; indeed, before Alfred was twelve years old his schoolboy days were over. It was under their own father's tuition that the boys got their unusually thorough grounding in the classics, and it was with his encouragement, undoubtedly, that they became familiar with so much that was good in the literature of their own tongue.

In later life Tennyson had few distinct memories to record of these uneventful years. A vivid impression of the festivities which attended the coronation of George IV., a reminiscence of the boy Alfred's overwhelming personal grief at the news of Byron's death, — these are all. But we are able to picture not a little of the every-day life of the brothers during this quiet period: how Alfred's reticence and love of solitude contrasted with his companion's easy cordiality and high spirits; yet how much and how fondly they read and wrote together, criticising each other's work with friendly eagerness; and how at last (in 1826) their need of pocket-money was met by an obliging bookseller of Louth, and the *Poems by Two Brothers* was timorously launched upon the world. The world paid little attention to the slender volume, which, in fact, had little more merit than the average collection of boyish verse. Frederick, the oldest brother, in this year went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, and in 1828 the young poets followed him. Here their lack of public-school training showed itself at first in painful shyness; but before the year was gone they had found congenial friends, and felt very much at home in Cambridge. Alfred, indeed, never ceased to prefer solitude to the society of strangers. All through life his manner was marked by a certain brusqueness, which seemed affectation to those who did not know him; but in the eyes of his friends he was not less charming as a companion than as a poet.

The most important of Tennyson's intimates at the university were Richard Monckton Milnes (afterward Lord Houghton), and Arthur Henry Hallam, who was to become the poet's closest friend. Both of these companions were defeated, in a public competition, by Tennyson, who gained his first recognition by a superior sort of prize poem called *Timbuctoo;* in which, for the first time, he made successful use of the pentameter measure that later was to become his favorite vehicle of expression. From this time on his university life was a continuous strain of poetic effort, whose results came before the public in 1830 in a little volume called *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical. Timbuctoo* had been much praised in academic circles; the *Poems,* full of a strange new glamour of music that was all their own, gave him at once a national standing, and, with some adverse notes, won much praise, even from critics like Coleridge. In the same year a volume of sonnets from Charles Tennyson was well received; Wordsworth, among others, even held him to be the better poet of the two. In 1831 Tennyson's father died, and the poet left Cambridge without taking his degree. Later in the year an engagement was made public between Arthur Hallam and Emily Tennyson.

The year 1832 was marked by the publication of a second volume of verse, entitled simply *Poems, by Alfred Tennyson.* 'The tendency of his genius was revealed in this volume. The author plainly was a college man, a student of many literatures, and, though an Englishman to the core, alive to suggestions from Italian and Grecian sources. His Gothic feeling was manifest in the *Lady of Shalott,* and *The Sisters;* his classicism in *Œnone;* his idyllic method, especially, now defined itself, making the scenery of a poem enhance the central idea, — thought and landscape being so blended that it was

difficult to determine which suggested the other. . . . The Greek influence is visible in many portions of the volume of 1832, sometimes through almost literal translations of classical passages. *Œnone,* modelled upon the New-Doric verse [the verse of Theocritus], ranks with *Lycidas* as an Hellenic study. While this chaste and beautiful poem fascinated every reader, the wisest criticism found more of genuine worth in the purely English quality of those limpid pieces in which the melody of the lyric is wedded to the sentiment and picture of the idyl, — *The Miller's Daughter, The May Queen,* and *Lady Clara Vere de Vere.* More dewy, fresh, pathetic native verse has not been written since the era of *As You Like It,* and *A Winter's Tale'* (Stedman). The advance over the former volume was unmistakable. While the poems as a whole showed no less fire and melody, they showed also far more thought, a deeper insight, and more than a hint, here and there, of genuine dramatic power. This volume, however, was met by an epidemic of adverse criticism, not entirely unwarranted, but surely inexpedient. Not many years had passed since the embitterment of the last days of Keats by like treatment at the hands of the critics. In Tennyson the shaft did not strike so deep, yet it had its inevitable effect. For ten years he kept an almost unbroken silence. But it was not time wasted. While the poet, at this time and always, shrank from unsympathetic criticism with a greater than any physical pain, he never failed to get profit from his torments. He now resolved not again to expose himself lightly to the harshness of his critics; but whatever was fair in their strictures he unhesitatingly took to himself. Making a companion of the disagreeable, for ten years he subjected himself to the most rigorous effort, the most searching self-criticism; and when, at the age of thirty-

three, he came once more before the public eye, it was with the confidence of matured power.

The following year (1833) brought into Tennyson's life its deepest trouble, in the shock of Arthur Hallam's early death; and in the spiritual battle with grief and doubt, which for nearly twenty years struggled toward its fit expression in the noble *In Memoriam.* It is more than possible that this deep experience did much to mature and dignify the young poet's nature. The first youthful burst of lyrical power was past; something different, perhaps, something greater, was to come: but for this Tennyson was content to wait. In 1837 the family home at Somersby was broken up, and thereafter, while he was still to be found from time to time with his mother, or at the country-house of some friend, he lived for the most part, hard at work, in solitary London lodgings. Yet these years were not all labor, and sadness, and solitude. In London he had the companionship, not only of his old Cambridge friends, but of some of the strongest men of the time — such men as John Stuart Mill, Landor, Thackeray, and Carlyle. To them he read his poems, and with them he passed many a comfortable evening of the bachelor sort. We have no picture so vivid of the poet in middle life as Carlyle's characteristic thumb-nail sketch: 'A great shock of rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive, aquiline face, most massive, yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes, cynically loose, free and easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musically metallic — fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe.'

At last, in 1842, came the issue of the *Poems by Alfred*

Tennyson, in two volumes; the first being mainly a reprint of previously published verse; the second almost entirely new. This time there was to be no lack of appreciation. The very reviews which ten years before had found little virtue in him, now awarded to the yet young poet a high place in English letters. Words of approbation came also from America; Poe wrote repeatedly in terms of unmeasured eulogy, Emerson in a more temperate strain, but still with praise.

There were several reasons for this change of the public front. The 1832 poems had suffered not more from their faults than from their unconventionality. It was in a certain sense the immaturity of the critic, rather than that of the poet, which stood in the way of critical appreciation. But during the following decade, although there was no fresh publication, the poet was not really silent. The poems continued to be read. Insensibly, but steadily, they made their way against precedent, forming by degrees a precedent of their own. In 1842 the volume of reprinted verse obtained almost as much favorable notice as the volume of later work. It is curious to note how closely, at this and later periods, Tennyson represented the dominant English mood. His earliest work had come too soon; it was, both in matter and in form, alien from the taste of the hour. Henceforth he was to be widely popular, because broadly representative. 'At the present day, were this volume to be lost,' says Mr. Stedman, of the 1842 issue, 'we possibly should be deprived of a larger specific variety of Tennyson's most admired poems than is contained in any other of his successive ventures. It is an assortment of representative poems. To an art more restrained and natural we here find wedded a living soul. The poet has convictions: he is not a pupil, but a master, and reaches intellectual greatness. His verses still bewitch youths and artists by their sentiments

and beauty, but their thought takes hold of thinkers and men of the world. He has learned not only that art, when followed for its own sake, is alluring, but that, when used as a means for expressing what cannot otherwise be revealed, it becomes seraphic.'

Nothing of note is to be recorded of the next few years, except the publication of several new editions of the *Poems in Two Volumes;* and the grant, in 1845, from Sir Robert Peel, then premier, of a royal pension of two hundred pounds a year.

In 1847 appeared *The Princess*, the first of a series of experiments in more sustained modes of composition. 'There comes a time in the life of every aspiring artist, when, if he be a painter, he tires of painting cabinet pictures, — however much they satisfy his admirers; if a poet, he says to himself: "Enough of lyrics and idyls; let me essay a masterpiece, a sustained production, that shall bear to my former work the relation which an opera or an oratorio bears to a composer's sonatas and canzonets." It may be that some feeling of this kind impelled Tennyson to write *The Princess*, the theme and story of which are both of his own invention' (Stedman). There is no doubt that, at the time of the publication of the poem, the public was well disposed toward its author. Indeed, the general opinion of the poet was so good that on this occasion too much was expected of him; the event was, of course, disappointment. Except from a few friends who were content to admire it as a gracefully fantastic *jeu d'esprit* with a saving leaven of sober meaning, the poem won little commendation. That it found plenty of readers, however, is plain enough from the fact that in the course of the six succeeding years it ran through five editions.

The year 1850 was made remarkable by three important events in Tennyson's history: his appointment as poet laure-

ate, the publication of *In Memoriam*, and the beginning of his exceptionally happy married life.

In Memoriam, the serious work from which *The Princess* seems to have been in some degree a relaxation, was another innovation in poetic form: an elegy in mosaic; a psychological study of grief in lyrical episodes. Unprecedented in method as the poem is, it has placed the name of Arthur Hallam fairly beside that of the more conventionally celebrated Edward King of Milton's *Lycidas*. The five following years brought forth numerous editions of the *Poems*, as well as of *The Princess* and *In Memoriam*. The most noteworthy product of the period, however, was *Maud: A Monodrama*. This poem was a legitimate development of the earlier lyrical monologues, but most of its critics failed to grasp its dramatic character. The oddity of its metrical forms was also an obstacle to general appreciation. With the poet it was always a favorite, the poem which he liked best to read to his friends; and none of those who heard it so rendered failed to find it full of fresh beauty and power.

With all his energy in new fields, however, Tennyson had lost nothing of his interest in idyllic narrative. The treatment in this form of the Arthurian legends seems to have retained its charm for him during more than half a century. The issue, in 1859, of the first four *Idyls of the King* was only the fulfilment of the early promise of *The Lady of Shalott* (1832), and *Morte d'Arthur* (1842); and the series was completed only with the production of *Balin and Balan*, in 1885.

The Arthurian idyl had seemed a distinct advance upon the earlier domestic idyl, — e.g., *Dora*, and *Audley Court*. Yet at this point we find Tennyson with an oddly characteristic versatility turning back to the older form, in *Sea Dreams*, *Enoch Arden*, etc. It is probable that he felt the airy unreality which

must belong to pictures of bygone chivalry, and that he therefore reverted, not without effort, to the delineation of nineteenth century scenes and characters. 'These poems argue a curious restlessness in the taste of the writer,' says Mr. Waugh: 'he seems uncertain still of the subjects most congenial to him, and the change is not an improvement. . . . Tennyson has lacked the delicate art of M. François Coppée, whenever he has approached subjects which lack beauty in themselves. In trying to adorn the scene he has obliterated its characteristic features. He has had no keen dramatic insight into a sordid situation: his art is thrown away on such coarse canvases. He felt this himself after a few attempts, and returned to his chivalry again. But for fully five years from the appearance of the first four *Idyls*, Tennyson passed through an interesting period of unsettlement.' It was in 1864 that a volume came out which consisted largely of poems of this domestic type. In 1869, however, three more of the *Idyls of the King* marked the return of the poet to his congenial sphere.

There was to be still another attempt, however, in the search for a perfect medium of expression; an attempt which should end only with the poet's life. Much of the work of his prime had been of dramatic value, but the step from dramatic monologue to dramatic dialogue must necessarily be abrupt and perilous. Between 1875 and 1892 appeared *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *The Cup*, *Becket*, *The Foresters*, and three other dramas, shorter and less worthy. *Harold*, which, is perhaps the most original of the plays, has never been put to the test of stage production. *Queen Mary* was presented in 1876 by Henry Irving, but technical perfection of rendering could not conceal the evident faults of construction and lack of vitality in the play itself. *The Cup* and *Becket*, in the same hands, have been somewhat more successful; but the conclusion to which

most critics are irresistibly led is that Tennyson was not by nature a playwright. All the dramas show evidences of the sheerest effort; they are excursions in an uncongenial field. Never, to the very end, on the other hand, did the old poet lose the lyrical power which was properly his own.

Although in middle life Tennyson had refused a baronetcy, in 1884 he yielded to the general desire, and was created a peer, with the title, 'Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Farringford.' The closing years of his life were breathed out in the serene quiet of Aldworth, in Surrey, and there, on October 6th, 1892, shortly before the date set for the publication of his last volume, he died, as calmly as he had lived.

'As a final word about Lord Tennyson, a laureate of thirty-seven years' service, it may be said that no predecessor has filled his office with fewer lapses from the quality of a poet. Southey's patriotic rubbish was no better, and not much worse, than his verse at large. Wordsworth, during the few years of his incumbency, wrote little official verse. Tennyson has freshened the greenness of the laurel; a vivid series of national odes and ballads is the result of his journey as its wearer. That some of his perfunctory salutations and pæans have been failures, notably the Jubilee ode, is evidence that genius does not always obey orders.' . . . 'Reviewing our analysis of his genius and works, we find in Alfred Tennyson the true poetic irritability, a sensitiveness increased by his secluded life, and displayed from time to time in "the least little touch of the spleen;" we perceive him to be the most faultless of modern poets in technical execution, but one whose verse is more remarkable for artistic perfection than for dramatic action and inspired fervor. His adroitness surpasses his invention. Give him a theme, and no poet can handle it

so exquisitely, — yet we feel that, with the Malory legends to draw upon, he could go on writing *Idyls of the King* forever. We find him objective in the spirit of his verse, but subjective in the decided manner of his style; possessing a sense of proportion, based upon the highest analytic and synthetic powers, — a faculty that can harmonize the incongruous thoughts, scenes, and general details of a composite period; in thought resembling Wordsworth, in art instructed by Keats, but rejecting the passion of Byron, or having nothing in his nature that aspires to it; finally, an artist so perfect in a widely extended range, that nothing of his work can be spared, and in this respect approaching Horace and outvying Pope; not one of the great wits nearly allied to madness, yet possibly to be accepted as a wiser poet, serene above the frenzy of the storm; certainly to be regarded, in time to come, as, all in all, the fullest representative of the refined, speculative, complex Victorian age' (Stedman).

THE POEM.

The English-reading public received the first edition of *The Princess* with not a little surprise and chagrin. Since the publication of the collected poems in 1842, the circle of Tennyson's admirers had been growing rapidly and steadily. It was now seventeen years since his first appearance as a notable writer of lyrics. He had already, previous to the appointment of Wordsworth, been talked of for the laureateship. Meanwhile, more than one of his critics had hinted that the time was come for some more sustained flight, for the display of something more than the merely lyrical knack upon which his reputation thus far hung. Whether Tennyson made the attempt in direct response to pressure of this sort

we do not know. Certain it is that when it transpired that he was at work upon a poem of greater scope, — an epic, it was whispered, — expectation ran high. Most people seem to have looked for the treatment in the grand style of some high and serious theme; something which should approach in kind, if not in degree, the work of Homer and Dante and Milton. No wonder that when *The Princess* came, the public felt its seriousness to be called in question, its dignity plainly challenged. Here was a long poem, to be sure, but a poem of inconsequential subject and uneven treatment. It could hardly be classified as epic, or even as legitimate metrical romance, yet what else did it pretend to be? What label was to be affixed to this hybrid product? The narrative lacked reality, the characters lacked consistency; one could not trace the serious path of true love without bringing up in a farcical situation; and the laughter in turn faded into disquisition upon the vulgar topic of 'woman's rights.'

It must be remembered that *The Princess* made its *début* under conditions which no longer obtain, in England or elsewhere; conditions which tended to make the element of burlesque in the poem more prominent to the reader of that day than it is now. The question of the higher education of women was then regarded as little more than a corollary to the vexed problem of woman's political sphere. The 'woman's rights' agitation was then undergoing in England the undignified apprenticeship of a new and doubtful cause. Both from the ill-considered, sometimes grotesque, methods of its advocates, and from the hardly less extravagant censures of its opponents, the result was that the question could not lie in the public mind as a topic for impartial and serious treatment of any sort — how much less for poetic treatment. If it were possible for us at this day to find among our

young poets one who could claim half as much seriously beautiful work as Tennyson had to his credit in 1847; and if we were to receive as an innovation from his pen a long poem, which defied categories, and which was apparently founded upon the opera-bouffe problem of the 'new woman': we should then have a fairly accurate experience of the auspices under which *The Princess* first appealed to its readers. The first two editions, moreover, were but crude and meagre in comparison with the present version of the poem. Not until the third edition (1850) were the five great songs inserted; the fourth edition (1851) saw the introduction of the business of the 'weird seizures,' which, however questionable in its actual effect, doubtless represents an effort toward giving greater spiritual dignity to the characters and events. For six years after its first publication, the poet seems to have been restlessly striving by numerous minor changes to lessen the extravagance of the burlesque, and to make the vein of serious feeling more significant to the ordinary reader. Not till the fifth edition (1853) was the poem given its present form.

And yet the fact that *The Princess* is to the modern reader a source of greater satisfaction than it can have been to its earliest critics, is due not entirely to later improvements in detail, or to the softening and subordinating by time of that risky topic of sex. The modern reader attacks the poem from a different point of view, or at least in a different mood. He can no longer, by any possibility, receive it as an ill omen. Tennyson's great energies are stilled, but only after abundant achievement. To a few modern admirers, it is true, this work appeals as the poet's most satisfying product; but most of us are content to see in it what Dr. Van Dyke has seen, 'one of the minor poems of a major poet.' It pleases us better than it pleased its early audience, not because we find in it

so much more, but because we expect so much less, of the highest poetic value. If, as those first critics did, we attempt to square the poem with classic standards of narrative and dramatic excellence, or if, like certain later enthusiasts, we claim a place for it as a didactic masterpiece, we must find ourselves committed to the consideration of some difficult problems.

First, is it a great narrative poem? In conceding that a poetic medley is a possible, even a legitimate, exercise of the poet's creative power, we do not surrender the right to demand some degree of unity. It has been commonly claimed that the Prologue and the Epilogue disarm criticism by their frank statement of the incongruous elements which make up the body of the poem. But the poet, it is evident, does not mean to be taken too literally. No one would admit for a moment the claim of a mere versified jumble of incoherences upon the honest criticism which is due to honest literature. What degree of success was possible to such an attempt as Tennyson here made, whether so close an intimacy of romance and burlesque fantasy is potentially consistent with the highest art, we need not discuss. In any event of such a discussion we should be justified in stipulating that the incongruities of the subject should not infect the method and manner of its treatment.

In the first place it should be noted that while in theme and scope the poem was different from anything which Tennyson had previously done, it was in treatment what might have been expected, predominantly idyllic. Previous to this time he had produced two varieties of the idyl; the modern domestic idyl, such as *Dora*, *Walking to the Mail*, *Audley Court*, etc.; and the mediæval romantic or epic product to which he gave the same name in the *Idyls of the King*. In *The Princess* we are suddenly faced with a composite of the two types.

Yet the structure of the poem was not without precedent in the poet's earlier work. *The Epic — Morte d'Arthur* (1842) had presented the same surface in miniature, — a nineteenth century introduction and conclusion imbedding an epic fragment upon a mediæval theme. But there is an essential difference. In *The Epic — Morte d'Arthur*, the story itself is so sharply distinct in spirit and coloring from its modern setting that one feels no clash in the contrast. In *The Princess*, on the contrary, the light ephemeral tone of the Epilogue carries over, and forms one of the elements in the included poem itself. This is perhaps inevitable from the nature of the subject, but it is certainly one of the reasons why the pleasure in a first reading of the poem is to most of us touched with a vague feeling of discomfort. If it were profitable to imagine the poem other than it is, we might, not too fancifully, suppose that a certain gain in effectiveness might have accrued to Prologue and Epilogue from the use of such idyllic prose as Landor's, or better, of such daintily embellished rhyme as Tennyson himself had so perfectly at his command. It is true that Tennyson's idyllic method was closely modeled upon that of Theocritus, who boldly chose as his medium the Homeric hexameter, and adapted it with marvelous skill to the treatment of his delicate themes. So the great English idyllist has employed the English heroic measure, the metre of *Hamlet* and *Paradise Lost.* He too has attained success; in the Arthurian group, which possess the advantage of being heroic in subject also, an eminent success. In the modern idyls, however, we are struck more with the technical perfection of the verse than with its fitness for the use to which it has been put. To say that the poet has succeeded in some degree is only to say that he has triumphed over difficulties; and in many

cases the marks of the struggle are still upon the finished product. A common feeling in his readers is still that the English pentameter, flexiblé as it has been proved to be, lends itself most readily to the treatment of forms more intense than that of the idyl, at least the domestic idyl. In the Prologue, Interlude, and Epilogue of *The Princess*, beyond a few descriptive touches, there is little which seems to be in the *enjoyment* of its natural medium. Possibly it is not too much to say that a greater variety of metrical form (and in *Maud* the poet shortly escaped from the pentameter into an unexampled variety of metre and rhyme) might have given the poem greater unity of impression.

But waiving the question of its setting, is the main body of the poem possessed of unity and power? We are not assenting to Poe's 'flash of lightning' theory of poetry, when we say that a very small portion of *The Princess* is highly poetic; certainly the lyrical burst of inspired energy does not present the only type of poetic (creative) excellence. We do mean to say, however, that in this poem Tennyson fails to show, unless in a single passage, the description of the tournament, other excellences than those lyric and idyllic excellences which had been in evidence in his poetry from the first. The real merit of the poem is not in its narrative or dramatic or didactic beauty, but in the beauty of its songs and its descriptions. 'The songs,' says Mr. Stedman, 'reach the high-water mark of lyrical composition. Few will deny that, taken together, the five melodies, "As through the land," "Sweet and low," "The splendor falls on castle walls," "Home they brought her warrior dead," and "Ask me no more!"—that these constitute the finest group of songs produced in our century; and the third, known as the *Bugle Song*, seems to many the most perfect English lyric since the

time of Shakespeare. In *The Princess* we also find Tennyson's most successful studies upon the model of the Theocritan isometric verse. He was the first to enrich our poetry with this class of melodies, for the burlesque pastorals of the eighteenth century need not be considered. Not one of the blank verse songs in the Arthurian epic equals in structure or feeling the "Tears, idle tears," and "O swallow, swallow, flying, flying south!"' There are many descriptive passages of perfect beauty, and others which are marred only by that over-elaboration and unbalancing attention to detail which were prominent traits of his earliest work, and of which he was accused to the very end.—The poem, in short, is full of minor beauties; we have still to look upon it as a whole.

We find two kinds of narrative to consider here, the serious and the burlesque. The serious portions of the narrative are of uneven merit. The escape of the Prince and his companions, the rescue of the Princess, and especially the account of the tournament, are bits of story-telling complete and admirable in themselves, but separated by lengths of variegated commonplace. Moreover, we are not always certain whether to take a scene seriously or not. When the poet admits that he has 'moved as in a strange diagonal,' he admits that he has found difficulty, not in reconciling the serious and the burlesque elements in the poem, but in fusing them; in making them the parts of a poetic whole. The difficulty lay for Tennyson in the fact that neither from temperament nor from training was the production of burlesque natural to him. That form of work, not valueless in itself, was unprofitable for him. Mr. Traill, in praising the poem for its humor, fails to remark upon the distinction between humor and burlesque. At the same time he criticises Fitzgerald for saying, 'Alfred, whatever he may think, cannot trifle. His smile is rather a grim

one.' Undoubtedly there is plenty of humor in the poem, but it exists independently of the burlesque. It is, indeed, the broadly humorous spirit of the poem, apparent as much as anywhere in what we call for convenience the 'serious' passages, which makes us willing to forgive the burlesque element — if we do forgive it. It would be absurd to expect a poet without a grand subject to attain the 'grand style'; but we are justified in expecting, in any work of art, a consistent style of some sort. Tennyson's attempt in *The Princess* to unite the incompatible has given us in many passages as a resultant a style which at times fairly approaches the grotesque. In either connection, professedly serious or burlesque as it may be, we find too often a jostle of modern colloquialism and Elizabethan idiom, of Miltonic massiveness and nineteenth century frivolity.

A similar confusion, arising from the same difficulty, is evident in the persons. It is impossible to look upon them as characters of dramatic distinctness. The poet himself was obviously dissatisfied with his work in this respect, as in others. The critics had from the first laid particular stress upon the weakness of the Prince's character. Tennyson seems to have felt in this connection the value of a suggestion which came from a reviewer of the first edition, that some element of mystery was due to the nature of the poem. Possibly he thought by the introduction of such a strain to induce a current of more genuine feeling in the first portion of the narrative, and to endow the hero of the romance with a more decided personality. At all events, in the fourth edition were inserted all the passages which have to do with the 'weird seizures.' The result was not happy. Mystery is hardly to be superimposed as an afterthought; the attempt is likely to end in nothing better than mystification. The vague unim-

pressiveness of the Prince's character is in no degree modified by the suggestion of intermittent epilepsy or lunacy. His visions have unfortunately no bearing on the progress of events; he is a prophet with nothing to prophesy about. In such a character we should hardly expect to find dramatic consistency. The Princess makes a not much greater claim upon our interest in her as a character study. During the greater part of the poem, although it is her lover who describes her to us, we meet with little that attracts us. When at the close she melts at last, she becomes charming; but it is another Princess: her conversion is as abrupt as Oliver's or Duke Frederick's, in that earlier fairy tale, *As You Like It.* She is no better qualified than the Prince, by virtue of that moral dignity which can belong only to a strong personality, to serve as the central figure of a serious romantic narrative. Neither can one comfortably laugh at her. As for Psyche, there are two facts which prevent our perfect sympathy with her: first, the inexcusable weakness and heedlessness with which she abandons her child; and second (the suggestion of an early critic), the bad form, from a romantic point of view, of her second marriage. The love affairs of young widows are better suited to low comedy than to ideal romance. She has, nevertheless, rather more claim upon our interest, as a genuine personality, than either the Prince or the Princess. Florian is a mere echo of the Prince; Melissa has no pretensions to reality; Lady Blanche plays well her somewhat conventional part, and is noted as being the only thoroughly unpleasant woman in Tennyson. The two kings and Arac are such characters as we meet later in the *Idyls of the King:* these three and Cyril, an admirable character of almost Shakespearean consistency, constitute, to the present writer, the main dramatic interest of the poem.

But is it fair to criticise the poem from this point of view? Mr. Stedman says of Tennyson, in a general connection: 'A great master of contemplative, descriptive, or lyrical verse, he falls short in that combination of action and passion which we call dramatic, and often gives us a series of marvelous tableaux in lieu of exalted speech and deeds. . . . With few exceptions, his most poetical types of men and women are not substantial beings, but beautiful shadows, which, like the phantoms of a stereopticon, dissolve if you examine them too long and closely.'

The Princess has often been compared to *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and the *Winter's Tale.* So far as the improbability of the events and the elusiveness of the characters are concerned, the comparison is a fair one. There is one difficulty, however, which exists only in the later extravaganza. The exigencies of the medley demand extraordinary service of the *personæ.* The same persons must do duty as romantic, as comic, and as farcical characters; and if they are not suborned to the uses of tragedy, the escape is a narrow one. In the Shakespeare comedies, on the other hand, the line is pretty clearly drawn between the romantic and the humorous type. Suppose, instead of Oliver and Frederick, it had been Rosalind who needed conversion, and that not from romantic villany, but from pedantic masculinity; what should we be able to make of her character? No, Rosalind in gown or doublet is always sweet Rosalind, and if Touchstone laughs at her, it is loving laughter. In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, dainty Titania is compromised by being made absurd; but we know it is not she, after all. It is the solitary misfortune of Tennyson's Princess to be at once butt and heroine, sweetheart and pedant, masculinely tyrannical and femininely submissive.

Neither for its narrative strength nor for its dramatic merit, then, can we consider *The Princess* a nobly poetic work. And now — for the intellectual significance of a poem must always be a secondary matter in literary study — let us look at the theme. Does the poem represent a serious attempt to solve specific problems? Or is it a love story? Perhaps it is sufficient to answer that every genuine love story solves a great many problems, specific and general. All pure love-making is largely didactic; and there is some extremely good love-making at the close of this poem. The Prince says wise things about the sphere of woman, and her relationship to man, because he is very much in love; it is given him to see deeply because he feels deeply. Indeed, the conception of the Prince owes most of its attractiveness to this sudden glibness of love-inspired insight. It is surely unnecessary to contend that he expresses exactly the opinion of Tennyson, and that Tennyson wrote the poem with the expression of just those truths in mind, as its main purpose. A recent editor says, '*The Princess* is a romance designed to indicate the poet's conception of the true sphere of woman and her function in society. The purport of the poem is didactic.' This seems to the present writer extremely doubtful. As no pure utterance of the lover, so no sincere utterance of the poet, can be without its ethical values. But such values are quite as likely to be inherent, incidental, as to be premeditated. It is worth while for us to note, let us say, not what lessons Tennyson 'intended to teach,' but what lessons are inherent in the poem, as the work of a genuine poet.

There are a number of minor 'morals' which have been much enlarged upon by critics; for example, that knowledge is not 'all in all'; that 'woman is not undevelopt man, but diverse'; that only in the perfect union of woman and man

lies the possibility of the highest usefulness of each; and so forth. These truths are plainly a part of the poem; they would even possess a certain independent interest if they were to be supposed to stand alone. They do not stand alone, however, but are subordinate to the thought which is clearly dominant in this poem, as in all Tennyson's poetry; the familiar thought that all progress must be a matter of slow evolution from lower to higher, from higher to highest. In accordance with this underlying conception, then, the story demonstrates, or rather illustrates anew, the fact that no sudden revolt can bring about perfection of any kind, although it may constitute a necessary step in the advance toward perfection; that all good things are to come to humanity, but that they must come slowly; and that, in the face of human doubt, and of disappointment to individual human methods, the law of gradual development is the law of love, and leads us, slowly but irresistibly, toward that

> 'One far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves.'

So much intellectual virtue is to be recognized in the poem. As has been said, it breathes from the work as a whole; that is, it does not depend for its enforcement upon the utterance at the conclusion of the hero's love-wisdom, or upon the poet's own words in the Epilogue.

But there is still another force in the poem besides that which lies in the formulation or embodiment of any intellectual abstraction. We have hitherto found no striking dignity in the narrative or in the characters. Where then shall we look for the source of that inner energy with which, even in its early half-farcical episodes, the poem is indubitably furnished? Spiritually, the poem presents to us a single

figure of commanding interest. Among all the persons who appear in the course of the story there is just one of perfect dignity, eloquent throughout, the centre and author of the action itself, Psyche's little daughter, the baby Aglaïa. The discovery, or the first explicit statement of this fact, is due to Mr. Dawson: 'The babe, in the poem as in the songs,' he says, 'is made the central point upon which the plot turns; for the unconscious child is the concrete embodiment of Nature herself, clearing away all merely intellectual theories by her silent influence. Ida feels the power of the child. Whenever the plot thickens, the babe appears. It is with Ida upon her judgment seat. In the topmost height of the storm the wail of the "lost lamb at her feet" reduces her eloquent anger into incoherence. She carries it when she sings her song of triumph. When she goes to tend her wounded brothers on the battle-field she carries it. Through it and for it Cyril pleads his successful suit, and wins it for the mother. For its sake the mother is pardoned.' In the child, and the insistence upon the power of the child and of the home ideals of which the child is the symbol, lies the unity of the poem. Unity of action, unity of character, unity of thought, even, it hardly claims to have: spiritual unity it claims and has.

In conclusion, the present editor would suggest that the student be encouraged to approach *The Princess* not as a poetic masterpiece, but as a delightful bit of fiction in verse. There is no greater danger to the novice in the study of literature than the worshipful method of attack. Every book which is worth studying is not a masterpiece. The process of study ought to make the limitations as well as the points of excellence more noticeable; for it is quite as important that the student should learn from the start what to deprecate

as what to admire.* Admitting that *The Princess* is not to be ranked with the noblest works of our literature, or even with the highest work of Tennyson, we must none the less admit that it is a story which it would be difficult to read without pleasure, or to study without interest. It has always been popular with its readers, and even with its wariest critics. 'For my own part,' says Mr. Traill, 'I confess to finding it, if not one of the poetically greatest, yet the most humanly complete, of all the poet's works.' 'Other works of our poet are greater,' says Mr. Stedman, in the same vein, 'but none is so fascinating as this romantic tale: English throughout, yet combining the England of Cœur de Leon with that of Victoria in one bewitching picture.' The characters on the whole are as consistent, and the narrative is as connected, as the needs of the average fairy-tale demand; the moral is excellent; and the larger spiritual significance of the poem is more than could be expected from such a setting. The present writer desires to conclude by quoting from Mr. Waugh, one of Tennyson's latest and ablest critics, the comment which most compactly and fairly represents his own judgment:

'In the new setting the old note is the key-note the old note of gradual development, of steady progress, "conserving the hopes of man." No social revolution, no impetuous crusade for woman's rights, can effect the good that must come

* 'Myrtis and Corinna have no need of me. To read and recommend their works, to point out their beauties and defects, is praise enough.

"How!" methinks you exclaim, "to point out defects! is that praising?"

Yes, Cleone; if with equal good faith and accuracy you point out their beauties too. It is only thus a fair estimate can be made; and it is only by such fair estimate that a writer can be exalted to his proper station.'—LANDOR, *Pericles and Aspasia*, xxxvii.

by degrees. The emancipated woman is no heroine to the poet; he knows a better:

> "Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants.
> No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
> In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
> Interpreter between the gods and men."

It is through the love of such a woman that a man accomplishes his manhood. The affections cannot be repressed: without love life is unfinished.

Apart from this underlying motive, which rises to the surface only with the end of the poem, *The Princess* is little but a dreamy story to read in a garden on a summer afternoon, full of music, and fuller still of rich and suggestive imagery. The insertion of the songs, delicate and beautiful in themselves, serves only to accentuate the artificiality of the whole work. Tennyson's detractors are ready to accuse him of over-refinement, of an eye too prone to color, and an ear too sensitive to melody, losing in their rapture the sights and sounds of the real, eternal truth. If such an accusation were to be urged, it could, perhaps, be best urged from an analysis of *The Princess.* For here Tennyson is in his dreamiest and his least virile mood; here he indulges his senses to the waste of his thought. There is a time for everything; and *The Princess* is not without its special charm. It is not Tennyson's highest work, neither is it his lowest; it merely requires a sympathetic temperament in the reader to appear satisfying. It needs a temperament of momentary laziness, apt to languor, and inclined to a light satire, which shall not busy itself to wound too deeply. With this mind we shall find *The Princess* a storehouse of good things, a midsummer day's dream with a spell and fantasy that hold us to the end.'

THE PRINCESS:

A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough, with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set;
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,

Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And 'This,' he said, 'was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! We keep a chronicle
With all about him' — which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book,
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost, or seem'd as lost —
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook:
O miracle of noble womanhood!'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he said,
'To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth,
And sister Lilia, with the rest.' We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to me;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon; Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied,
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran: a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute, and past:
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations; so that sport
Went hand in hand with Science; otherwhere
Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with 'Soldier-laddie,' and overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight, and smacking of the time;
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth
And Lilia, with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph himself
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,

Half child, half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them: then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's dogs; and one
Discuss'd his Tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
My book to mind: and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him), 'lives there such a woman now?'

Quick answer'd Lilia, 'There are thousands now

Such women, but convention beats them down:
It is but bringing up; no more than that:
You men have done it: how I hate you all!
Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then
That love to keep us children! O I wish
That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a College like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught;
We are twice as quick!' And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling, 'Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for Proctors, dowagers for Deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,
However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:
'That 's your light way; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,

And sweet as English air could make her, she:
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, — only long'd,
All else was well, — for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vext the souls of Deans;
They rode; they betted; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying Terms:
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke.
Part banter, part affection.
'True,' she said,
'We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.'

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word again!' he said.
'Come, listen! here is proof that you were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;
And there we took one tutor as to read:
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season: never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:

For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet
And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you all
In wassail; often, like as many girls,
Sick for the hollies and the yews of home—
As many little trifling Lilias—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
And *What's my thought?* and *When and where and how?*
And often told a tale from mouth to mouth,
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that:
A pleasant game she thought: she liked it more
Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
But these—What kind of tales did men tell men,
She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips;
And Walter nodded at me: '*He* began,
The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,
The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,'
Said Lilia; 'Why not now?' the maiden Aunt.
'Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the place,

Heroic, — for a hero lies beneath, —
Grave, solemn!'
Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd,
And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
An echo like a ghostly woodpecker
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
(A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
With color) turn'd to me with 'As you will;
Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,' clamor'd he,
'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,
Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
The Prince to win her!'
'Then follow me, the Prince,'
I answer'd; 'each be hero in his turn!
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —
Heroic seems our Princess as required —
But Something made to suit with time and place,
A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —
This *were* a medley! we should have him back
Who told the 'Winter's Tale' to do it for us.
No matter: we will say whatever comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space.'
So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.'
My mother, pitying, made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,

So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
But my good father thought a king a king;
He cared not for the affection of the house;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgment.
Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm, as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back
A present, a great labor of the loom;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
He said there was a compact; that was true:
But then she had a will; was he to blame?
And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled, like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. 'My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said:
'I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'
And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with you too.'
Then, laughing, 'What if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth!
Take me: I'll serve you better in a strait;
I grate on rusty hinges here:' but 'No!'
Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets: break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and past
Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees:
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town, and half in dread

To hear my father's clamor at our backs,
With 'Ho!' from some bay-window, shake the night;
But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city, thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,
But bland the smile that, like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water, drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star:
Not like a king. Three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,' he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
'All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony —
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets rang;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
As children; they must lose the Child, assume
The Woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful; odes
About this losing of the Child; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
And they that know such things — I sought but peace;
No critic I — would call them masterpieces:
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
A certain summer palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier: I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it: and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
We know not, — only this: they see no men,
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine: but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode
Many a long league back to the North. At last,
From hills that look'd across a land of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties;
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd,
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he said,
'Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The king would bear him out;' and at the last —
The summer of the vine in all his veins —
'No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had past that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
She look'd as grand as doomsday, and as grave:
And he, he reverenced his liege-lady there;
He always made a point to post with mares;

His daughter and his housemaid were the boys:
The land, he understood, for miles about
Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs'—
But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid,
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, holp
To lace us up, till each in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street, half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir

Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were Tutors. 'Lady Blanche,' she said,
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers are we,'
One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East:

'Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'
This I seal'd:
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes:

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea, glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore, just seen that it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.

For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II.

AT break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited. Out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the sun,

Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
And so much grace and power, breathing down
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

'We give you welcome: not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'
'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From the court,'
She answer'd; 'then ye know the Prince?' and he:
'The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your highness that,
He worships your ideal.' She replied:
'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him: when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,

You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes justlier balanced, scale with scale.'

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards: and 'Now,' she cried,
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statues! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite

And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us; you may go:
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive.'
She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal: back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's. As we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils: she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
Then Florian, — but no livelier than the dame
That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge, —
'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'
Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began.

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets: then the monster, then the man;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,

Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, — and here
Among the lowest.'
Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just: till, warming with her theme,
She fulmined out her scorn of laws Salique,
And little-footed China; touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry,
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, — superstition all awry:
However, then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men were taught:
Let them not fear. Some said their heads were less:
Some men's were small; not they the least of men;

For often fineness compensated size:
Besides, the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using; thence the man's, if more, was more.
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so
With woman. And in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
Sappho and others, vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy,
Dilating on the future: 'Everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind;

Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till, as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried,
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.' 'O,' she said,
'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could think
The softer Adams of your Academe,
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
As chanted on the blanching bones of men?'
'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.
'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! My vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange

For warning: bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones;
Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
All for the common good of womankind.'
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche.'
I struck in:
'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came.'
'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country, none;
If any, this: but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? Love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls.'
'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess judge

Of that,' she said: 'farewell, Sir — and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,
'The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled? We point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins.'
'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?'
'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for whom
I would be that for ever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,
'That on her bridal morn, before she past

From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? Look! for such are these and I.'
'Are you that Psyche,' Floriàn ask'd, 'to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?'
'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,
'The mother of the sweetest little maid
That ever crow'd for kisses.'
'Out upon it!'
She answer'd, 'peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? A little will I yield:

Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet —
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all.'

What could we else? we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
'I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?'
With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice:
'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color), with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes
As bottom agates, seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you!
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me,
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not,'
Replied Melissa; 'no — I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'
'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace;
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'
Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you, —
Myself for something more.' He said not what;
But 'Thanks,' she answer'd; 'go: we have been too long
Together: keep your hoods about the face;
They do so that affect abstraction here.
Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well.'

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
And held her round the knees against his waist,
And blew the swoln cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.
And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous epic lilted out

By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is; the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame; the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower;
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest:
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till, like three horses that have broken fence
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke
'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.'
'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril, 'very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?'
'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian; 'have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?'
'O trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,

The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher. And now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth;
And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou
Modulate me, soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came: but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go!'

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair,
In colors gayer than the morning mist,
The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her who, rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with Professors: they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
A clamor thicken'd, mixed with inmost terms
Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone,
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that:
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid and sought
In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter: others lay about the lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing: what was learning unto them?
They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
Men hated learned women: but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
Melissa, hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel bells
Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies:
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
  Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
  Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
  Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
  Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
  Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court, that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness, from their native East.

There, while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
And 'Fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may!
My mother knows:' and when I ask'd her 'How?'
'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet not mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not or seldom used;

Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you:
Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
"Who ever saw such wild barbarians?
Girls? — more like men!" and at these words the snake,
My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it? but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
"O marvelously modest maiden, you!
Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful: "Men" (for still
My mother went revolving on the word),
"And so they are, — very like men indeed, —
And with that woman closeted for hours!"
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
"*Why — these — are — men:*" — I shudder'd: — "*and you know it.*"
"O ask me nothing," I said: — "*And she knows too,*
And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd
The truth at once, but with no word from me;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'
Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again: than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,'
He added, 'lest some classic angel speak
In scorn of us, "They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,
'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'
'O long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated,
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:

She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and light
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing after her,
'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I,
An eagle, clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! — True, she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than threescore of men,
She sees herself in every woman else;
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but — ah, she! — whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning sun.'

So saying, from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high

Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That, blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning, 'O hard task,' he cried,
'No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition, crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True — we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. "Not more than now," she said,
"So puddled as it is with favoritism."
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:

Her answer was "Leave me to deal with that."
I spoke of war to come, and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced: "Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
Wink at our advent: help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever." Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
'That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder:' then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream;
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue, following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her, and to me she said:
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No — not to her,'
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say.'
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassadresses

From him to me? We give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd —
'Our king expects — was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him even to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read — no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl; —
As girls were once, — as we ourself have been:
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile,
'And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself — and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.'

'Alas, your Highness breathes full East,' I said,
'On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? Think;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?'
                                        And she exclaim'd,
'Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild!
What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?
You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them well:
But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.
Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts,
Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
O — children — there is nothing upon earth

More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err! Nor would we work for fame;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one POU STO whence afterhands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living each a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess, with her grand
Imaginations, might at all be won.
And she broke out, interpreting my thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
We are used to that: for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
O if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf, as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd, as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you love
The metaphysics! Read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all.' 'And yet,' I said,
'Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,

Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow Time;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day.'
                                        She spake
With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet,' I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask),
'To linger here with one that loved us.' 'Yea,'
She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw

The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the sun:' then, turning to her maids,
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands.' At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd there
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side: but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun
Grew broader toward his death, and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
  And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
  And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
  And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
  The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
  They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
  And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV.

'There sinks the nebulous star we call the sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to where below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent,
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport, rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us; lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music:' and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang.

**'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,**

In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

She ended with such passion that the tear
She sang of shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, 'If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,

Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights;
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden: let the past be past; let be
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow:' then to me,
'Know you no song of your own land,' she said,
'Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance, and the hues
Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine?'

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
What time I watch'd the swallow winging south
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang; and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

'O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

'O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my voice
Rang false: but smiling, 'Not for thee,' she said,
'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time

When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up.
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul! I had a maid of honor once;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit, than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves, and owed to none. Enough!
But now, to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?'

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head, with eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,

Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear, Sir,' I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love,
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death;' 'To horse,'
Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!'
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom:
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,

Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place, and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave,
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms; they cried 'She lives:'
They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends; but push'd alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,

I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.
A step
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt 'If this were she;'
But it was Florian. 'Hist, O hist,' he said,
'They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is the cry.
How came you here?' I told him: 'I,' said he,
'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
Arriving all confused among the rest,
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
And I slipt out: but whither will you now?

And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
What if together? That were not so well.
Would rather we had never come! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I
That struck him: this is proper to the clown,—
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,—
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night,—the song
Might have been worse, and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon,—as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament:
But as the water-lily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, 'Names:'
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
And double in and out the boles, and race
By all the fountains: fleet I was of foot:
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not:
And secret laughter tickled all my soul.

At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess, where she sat
High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and rain,
And labor. Each was like a Druid rock; 261
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne: and therebeside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:

I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother: those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend: you began to change, —
I saw it and grieved, — to slacken and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her;
To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up, in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve. And thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean;
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: *they* knew her: *they* endured,
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,

To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold "We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche:" you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridden to the hills, she likewise: now, I thought,
That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame —
I grant in her some sense of shame — she flies
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,

I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast:
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, 'Good:
Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child),
Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
'The plan was mine. I built the nest,' she said,
'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to updrag
Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches, which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
'Read,' and I read — two letters — one her sire's:

'Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you;
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's, running thus:
'You have our son: touch not a hair of his head
Render him up unscathed: give him your hand:
Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole.'
So far I read;
And then stood up and spoke impetuously:

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock, a life
Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost scuth
And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida rang the woods;

The leader wildswan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
Not in this frequence can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre: let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew
Another kind of beauty in detail
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The seal does music; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half
Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die:
Yet that I came not all unauthorized,
Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee
Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam,
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded: high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head: but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and call'd
Across the tumult, and the tumult fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: *I* dare
All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us, and they come:
If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you: but for those
That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know
Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,

Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.'

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

'You have done well, and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:
And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done, and like a gentleman.
You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
O would I had his sceptre for one hour!
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee! *I* bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,

Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:
I trample on your offers and on you:
Begone: we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates.'
In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny: so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street, and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic nigh
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.
This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings, I was one

To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise: then we moved away.

INTERLUDE.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
'Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me?'
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her, like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,' she said,

'And make us all we would be, great and good.'
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the palace,' I.
'The second two: they wait,' he said; 'pass on;
His Highness wakes:' and one that clash'd in arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led,
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.
Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisping of the innumerous leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,

Panted from weary sides, 'King, you are free!
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunters in the sludge:'
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag; disprinced from head to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, 'Look,
He has been among his shadows.' 'Satan take
The old women and their shadows! (thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go: Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping: 'Then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,' he whisper'd to her,
'Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie not thus.
What have you done but right? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince: look up: be comforted:
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
When fallen in darker ways.' And likewise I:
'Be comforted: have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me?' She heard, she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said, 'my friend —
Parted from her — betray'd her cause and mine —
Where shall I breathe? Why kept ye not your faith?
O base and bad! What comfort? none for me!'
To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I pray

Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!'
At which she lifted up her voice and cried:

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
"The child is hers" — for every little fault,
"The child is hers;" and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child:
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her:
Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
Who gave me back my child?' 'Be comforted,'
Said Cyril, 'You shall have it:' but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so,

Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.
By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp, and inward raced the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without
Found the gray kings at parle: and 'Look you,' cried
My father, 'that our compact be fulfill'd:
You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you and man:
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
She yields, or war.'
Then Gama turn'd to me:
'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl: and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large
How say you, war or not?'
'Not war, if possible,
O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot
By gentleness than war. I want her love.

What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults?
She would not love; — or brought her chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord?
Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth, bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, 'Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for shame!
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do;
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd; wins, tho' dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses: thus I won

Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning; but this firebrand — gentleness
To such as her! If Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it.'
'Yea, but Sire,' I cried,
'Wild nature needs wise curbs. The soldier? No:
What dares not Ida do that she should prize
The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,
True woman: but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and heaven? And she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods

Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point: not war;
Lest I lose all.'
'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'
Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;
And there is something in it, as you say:
But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:

But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida: something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'
                    Here he reach'd
White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode;
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner. Anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all:
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words:

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?

But then this question of your troth remains:
And there's a downright honest meaning in her;
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fair-play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;
I say she flies too high; 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it —
'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by St. something — I forget her name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not: wave your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
'Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.'

Then spake the third: 'But three to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
More, more, for honor: every captain waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled die.'
'Yes,' answer'd I, 'for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye will.
It needs must be for honor if at all:
Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
Her compact.' ''Sdeath! but we will send to her,'
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say:
Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,

Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life: three times he went:
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd:
He batter'd at the doors; none came: the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left,
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills, roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry:
Himself would tilt it out among the lads;
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur:
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace, ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone, and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it, and I read:

'O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation, when we heard
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of those, —
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leaven'd all:
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face

Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey:
And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace;
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings! — for their sport!
I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
In honor — what, I would not aught of false –
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still,
Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well; strike and strike home. O dear
Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the aftertime,
Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she

Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and Conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest:
'See that there be no traitors in your camp;
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd. — This Egypt-plague of men!
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here: indeed, I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
She shall not have it back: the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning; there the tender orphan hands
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world: farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunderstorms,
And breed up warriors! See now — tho' yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense — the spindling king,
This Gama, swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,

And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of all;
Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair, while the fires of hell
Mix with his hearth: but you — she's yet a colt —
Take, break her: strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd,
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
They say she's comely; there's the fairer chance:
I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom.'

Thus the hard old king:
I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause 'Take not his life:'
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win:'
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,

And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should fall;
And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of noon;
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in the land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict, with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd, but kept their seats:
Part roll'd on the earth, and rose again, and drew:
Part stumbled, mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,

And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and shield —
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, 'Can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this be so,
The mother makes us most' — and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statue-like,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven: but she
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall! With that I drave
Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
Gave way before him: only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,

Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet; tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spake nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI.

My dream had never died, or lived again,
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd, and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
'The Prince is slain!' My father heard, and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms, and rushes to the sun.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard

A noise of songs they would not understand:
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breath
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.'

'And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
To break them more, in their behoof whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there

Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names;
And said, 'You shall not lie in the tents, but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought; and served
With female hands and hospitality.'

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side

The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
'He saved my life: my brother slew him for it.'
No more: at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up: she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
And then once more she look'd at my pale face:
Till, understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives: he is not dead:
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace: we will tend on him
Like one of these; if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'

She said: but at the happy word 'He lives,'
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
So those two foes, above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening, mixt
Their dark and gray: while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother, and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine — mine — not yours,
It is not yours, but mine: give me the child!'
Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls; and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe: but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamoring on; till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew

Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying, as it seem'd,
Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine; and he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!—
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.
What would you more? Give her the child! remain
Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
Win you the hearts of women; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her:
Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,

Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, — her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill, —
Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
Dry flame, she listening; after sank and sank,
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child; she took it: 'Pretty bud!
Lily of the vale! half open'd bell of the woods!
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance; mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part: and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom' — here she kiss'd it: then —
'All good go with thee! take it, Sir,' and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche, as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,

And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm, and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own land
For ever: find some other: as for me,
I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak to me;
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac: 'Ida—'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her, take her hand; she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground;
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart—I heard her say it:
"Our Ida has a heart:" just ere she died:
"But see that some one with authority
Be near her still;" and I—I sought for one—

All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd;
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension: Heaven knows what; and now
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgment too. Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you, or such
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'
So said the small king, moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood, nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water: then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds: 'O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wish'd it — but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with death,
When your skies change again: the rougher hand
Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

'Come hither,
O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace me, come,
Quick while I melt; make reconcilement sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!
I seem no more: *I* want forgiveness too:
I should have had to do with none but maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why? — why? — Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace you yet once more
With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.
And now, O Sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
What use to keep them here — now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling even as they are.'
Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
'Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him
Of your great head — for he is wounded too —
That you may tend upon him with the prince.'
'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken: let him enter too.'
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she said,
'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:

We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'
'Ay so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease
The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out; but these men came to woo
Your Highness — verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye:
But Ida, with a voice that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn:

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all;
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die! — But had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult, but are gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer; lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each base,
To left and right, of those tall columns, drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled; while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame;
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries, past a hundred doors,
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due

To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others otherwhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagest; and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will: and everything was changed.

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea;
  The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
  With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
  Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
  I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
  Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
  Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
  I strove against the stream, and all in vain:
  Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
  Ask me no more.

VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
At first with all confusion: by and by
Sweet order lived again, with other laws:
A kindlier influence reign'd; and everywhere
Low voices, with the ministering hand,
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talk'd,
They sang, they read: till she not fair began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke: but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: void was her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,

And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,
And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
Expunge the world: so fared she gazing there;
So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she came,
And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the bowers
Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft
Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favor: here and there the small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities

Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
Then came a change; for sometimes I would catch

Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,
'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth:
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die:
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver tongues —
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —
From all, a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch; and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness: it was evening: silent light

Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd: a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

'If you be what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she paused;
She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;
Leapt fiery passion from the brinks of death;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman: lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love;
And down the streaming crystal dropt; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end: nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee! But mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held

A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read:

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone; and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I,
Thy shepherd, pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face;
The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes;
And the voice trembled, and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge: something wild within her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl —
'Ah fool, and made myself a queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the sun drop, dead, from the Signs.'
Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said, 'nor blame
Too much the sons of men, and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,

How shall men grow? But work no more alone!
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her—
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up, but drag her down—
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her—let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelopt man,
But diverse: could we make her as the man,
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
The man be more of woman, she of man;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
She, mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other even as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:

Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be!'
Sighing she spoke: 'I fear
They will not.'
'Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life.'
And again sighing she spoke: 'A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime:
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,

Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

'But I,'
Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike—
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts: they well might be; I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
You cannot love me.'

'Nay, but thee,' I said,
'From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
That mask'd thee from men's reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
Given back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,

Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my brows;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich To-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.'

EPILOGUE.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
The words are mostly mine; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
'I wish she had not yielded!' then to me,
'What if you drest it up poetically!'
So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque
With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
The women — and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:

And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass;
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
'You — tell us what we are;' who might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
Gray halls alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belt of hop and breadths of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the seas;
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

'Look there, a garden!' said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, 'and there!
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,

And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patent force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head;
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight;
The little boys begin to shoot and stab:
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest — now address'd to speech:
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat

But spoke not, wrapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

NOTES.

[The starred notes are designed for use in connection with a preliminary and more rapid reading of the poem.]

PROLOGUE.

1. 'The scene of the introduction is the garden at Swainston, the seat of the late Sir John Simeon, in the Isle of Wight, and the host, Sir Walter Vivian, is Sir John Simeon himself' (Waugh).

2. **lawns.** Cf. *Œnone*, 6; Milton, *L'Allegro*, 71; for a use by Tennyson of this word in its commoner modern meaning, see 95 below.

5. The local People's **Institute,** with its half-social, half-educational aims, was already (in 1847) a power in England.

11. **Greek, set with busts.** It was a comparatively modern country-house, therefore, as this architectural style was not adopted in England until about the middle of the eighteenth century.

12. **lovelier than their names;** their botanical names.

15. **Ammonites.** Large fossils, with the appearance of coiled snakes. See Scott, *Marmion*, II. xiii.

20. **Laborious orient ivory.** This is an unexampled instance of the artful adjustment of the sound to express the meaning. Note how accurately the complex 'sphere in sphere' of the Eastern ivory-carver is represented by the recurrence of the rolling *ori* sound. The verse stripped of its consonants (except r) and its unimportant vowels, reduces itself to this: ó | ri ó | ri ī | ory é | ri ére | .

21. **crease;** written also *creese* and *kris.*

38. **broke.** Note in 43 below, the alternate form *brake.* Tennyson also uses as parallel forms *cleft* and *clove*, *swam* and *swum*, etc.

55–6. **sown with happy faces,** etc. For a similar hendiadys, see VI. 56–7 below.

63. **steep-up.** Shakespeare uses both this and the contrasting form, *steep-down.*

* 66–7. **Echo answered in her sleep from hollow fields;** a beautiful and characteristic touch, but — imagine the dainty classic nymph, 'Daughter of the Sphere,' waking to answer 'a man with knobs and wires and vials'!

87–8. Mark the involved alliterative effect of these verses.

90. **satiated.** We need to remember, in reading British verse, that the secondary accent which we give to so many words of four or five syllables is almost unknown in England.

* 92. **lighter than a fire.** The airy delicacy of the ruin was more noticeable, it has been suggested, from its contrast with the massive strength of the mansion from which they had just come. 'Some one has said that the "idea" of Gothic architecture is "weight annihilated," while that of the Greek is "weight properly supported"' (Rolfe).

113–4–7. **Proctor — Tutor — Master.** See Appendix II.

128. **convention.** It is a pity we do not make more use of this good form instead of the cumbrous 'conventionality.' Tennyson employs it later, however, in the ordinarily accepted sense. See IV. 490 below.

* 161. **They lost their weeks.** The candidate for the bachelor's degree at Cambridge must pass nine terms in actual residence, and in order to 'count' each term, he must be present — at least at public dinner — for a certain number of weeks, usually about two-thirds of the whole number. **Deans.** See Appendix II.

176. **to read.** The English University man says 'read' where we say 'study;' note that here they are 'reading' mathematics.

182. **walks;** avenues of trees.

199. **solecisms.** What is the exact force of the word here?

PART I.

7. The weird conception of the possibility of being deprived of one's shadow was not uncommon in mediæval Europe. The most noted bit of literature with this as its central motive is Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl.*

26. **pedant.** Cf. Shakespeare, 'like a pedant that keeps a school

i' the church' (*Twelfth Night*, Act III. Sc. ii. 80). Keep this characterization in mind, as we shall meet the king later.

* 33. **proxy-wedded.** 'Proxy marriages were not uncommon in the Middle Ages,' says Mr. Wallace, 'but the word "wedded" is here used loosely. What really took place at this time was a "betrothal," a ceremony that bound the parties to nothing, being dissoluble at the will of either on attainment to years of discretion. It is noticeable that not elsewhere in the poem is the ceremony referred to as a marriage; Gama speaks of it vaguely as "a compact . . . a kind of ceremony" (122–3 below); the Prince himself, though here he uses the expression "wedded," dare not in the presence of the Princess call it more than a "pre-contract" (III. 191) — nay, just below (40) he speaks of "wedding" as a necessary complement to the previous performance to constitute a perfect marriage — and the Princess is quite justified in scorning the idea that it was in any way binding upon her in the absence of her own consent —

"baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond" (V. 388–9).'

The rite of the **bootless calf,** i.e., the stripping of the calf of the leg by the representative of the bridegroom in the presence of the bride, belonged properly to the actual marriage by proxy, not to the betrothal.

56. **twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.** No demonstration of the scientific accuracy of this simile can condone its prosaic awkwardness.

60. **snow'd.** For a similar transitive use of 'hail'd,' see Prologue, 155 above.

65. **cook'd his spleen.** This phrase is probably an echo of Homer's 'ἐπὶ νηυσὶ χόλον θυμαλγέα πέσσει,' *Iliad*, Bk. IV. 51. The Latin *coquere* was frequently used in a similar sense by Cicero and others. The ancients believed that the spleen was the seat of anger.

* 78–80. It is a coincidence worth noting, in view of what follows, that Cyril's volunteering immediately follows the mention of the 'lady of three castles.'

93. **dewy-tassell'd;** 'hung with catkins. It was springtime' (H. Tennyson). The poet used this adjective again in *In Memoriam*, lxxxvi. 6.

96–9. **A wind arose,** etc. A rather remarkable similarity has been noticed between this passage and one in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, —

> 'A wind arose among the pines; it shook
> The clinging music from their boughs, and then
> Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
> Were heard; "Oh follow, follow, follow me!"'

See Tennyson's comment, Appendix I.

110. **blowing bosks of wilderness.** 'Wilderness of blowing bosks' would be a more natural order in prose. 'Bosk,' and 'boscage' (a form which Tennyson uses more commonly), are of course akin to 'bush,' but bear a slightly different meaning. Be sure you get the sense of 'blowing' in this connection.

111. **mother-city;** a literal rendering of 'metropolis.' Elsewhere (*In Memoriam*, xcviii.), we find 'mother town' used with the same meaning.

114–5. These two verses contain an unusually effective simile. Notice the superiority of the present form over the reading of the early editions:

> 'But bland the smile that pucker'd up his cheeks.'

* 116. Gama was not fond of military or regal insignia. But though he lacks imposing qualities, he is attractive as one of the few dramatically consistent characters of the story.

129. Mr. Wallace offers an ingenious comment on **husbandry:** 'Note the exquisite irony in the use of this word in connection with the central delusion of the Lady Ida.'

134–5. **knowledge . . . all in all.** This (rather than that suggested by the preceding note) was the really 'central delusion,' the undermining fallacy in the Princess's theory of life.

167. Why was it a **land of hope?**

* 170. **the liberties;** the college grounds, in which the students were free to wander as they pleased.

197–8. **a sight to shake the midriff of despair with laughter.** Does this (purely Elizabethan) phrase complement the object, or the subject, of the sentence?

* 213. 'On entering the gates, the disguised youths find the grounds and halls full of knick-knacks and kickshaws —

Clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils.

Everywhere are busts, and statues, and lutes, and such-like *bric-à-brac* aids to knowledge,—promiscuously strewed about like blue china and crockery-ware bull-dogs in a modern drawing-room. Instinctively the male reader shrinks through this part of the poem, fearful of upsetting something' (Dawson).

218. **her song.** 'It is only the male bird which sings,' says Dawson. 'But the poets, all of them, keep the old Greek myth in mind, and while scientifically wrong, are poetically and historically correct, for Philomela was a princess who was turned into a nightingale which sang.' The Eastern poets, it should be noted, use the masculine (see note on IV. 104 below), as does Tennyson himself in *The Gardener's Daughter:*

'. . The nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.'

233–4. The classical student will find a simile very much like this in Homer, *Iliad*, Bk. II. 147–8.

239. **Uranian Venus.** According to Plato, there were two goddesses called Aphrodite (Venus); the Heavenly and the Common. Cupid, the spirit of unenlightened passion, was the son of the Common Venus. Why is the design of the seal an especially pertinent one, in view of the circumstances?

244. **A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight,** etc. See Tennyson's comment, Appendix I.

SONG.

* The song is here printed as it appeared in the fifth edition, without the intermediate quatrain, which seems to the present editor to mar the perfection of the little lyric:

'And blessings on the falling out
  That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
  And kiss again with tears.'

PART II.

8. **that sang all round with laurel.** Several critics have taken this to mean that the laurel was 'haunted by birds and bees.'

The suggestion of Hallam Tennyson seems more reasonable, as well as more obvious: that the poet had in mind simply the rustling of the laurel-leaves in the wind.

10. **Compact.** Compare Shakespeare's

> 'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
> Are of imagination all compact.'

boss'd with lengths of classic frieze. Cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I. 716.

38. **your ideal;** 'you as his ideal,' not 'his ideal (or idea) of you.'

44. **the child.** This rather humorously recalls her father's remark in I. 136 above.

48. **cast and fling;** a Shakespearean coupling of synonyms for emphasis which is not uncommon in Tennyson. See, for example, V. 210, below.

* 60. **enter'd on the boards.** This is another Cambridge University technicality; there the register of undergraduates' names is officially known as 'the boards.'

* 62–71. 'It is customary in English colleges,' says Mr. Wallace, 'to adorn the Hall or some other public room with portraits or statues of famous past members of the establishment. The college of the poem has no past, and the statues are those of eight of the most eminent women of antiquity, representing respectively legislative sagacity, political enterprise, military prowess, architectural skill, physical courage, intellectual culture, imperial ambition, and wifely devotion.'

Most of these names will need to be looked up in some classical dictionary.

65. **She that taught the Sabine,** etc. The nymph Egeria was fabled to have been the teacher and guide of the lawgiver-king, Numa Pompilius. Be sure to read Byron's noble apostrophe, in *Childe Harold*, Canto IV. cxv–cxix.

66. **The foundress of the Babylonian wall;** Semiramis.

68. **Rhodope.** Both Shakespeare and Landor give the name this form and accentuation. It is to be looked up, however, under *Rhodópis* (accented on the second syllable).

69–71. This sounding progress of names has a force and pomp almost Miltonic.

69. **Clelia** was one of the Roman hostages given to Porsena. She escaped by swimming the Tiber on horseback.

the Palmyrene; Zenobia.

95. **a double April old.** Note that while the child's age is given here in terms of the spring month, Tennyson expresses that of Psyche in 'summers,' and (in *The Palace of Art*), that of Homer in 'winters.'

97–8. **the dame that whisper'd,** etc. See Smith's *Classical Dictionary* under *Midas*, and note that it was not the wife who told the secret. The traditional uncertainty as to the culprit is hinted at by Pope, in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot:*

> ''Tis sung, when Midas' ears began to spring
> (Midas, a sacred person and a king),
> His very minister who spied them first
> (Some say his queen) was forced to speak or burst.'

*101–4. These lines give a poetic summary of the 'nebular hypothesis.'

106. **the prime.** Cf. *In Memoriam*, lvi.:

> 'Dragons of the prime,
> That tare each other in their slime.'

Contrast with the meaning of 'prime' in VI. 186 below.

112. **Appraised** here means simply 'praised.'

the Lycian custom. Herodotus says that it was the custom among the Lycians to take the maternal name, and to trace the ancestry in the female line.

113. **lay at wine,** etc. The Etruscan women were admitted to the banquet on equal terms with the men. **Lar** (or Lars) and **Lucumo** were Etruscan titles, corresponding approximately to the English 'Lord' and 'Honorable.'

117. A sufficient comment upon the **laws Salique** (or Salic) is to be found in Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, Act I. Sc. ii.

118. **touch'd on Mahomet with much contempt.** 'The slurring over of the name, by allotting to its three syllables the space of one only, is no doubt designed by the poet to accentuate the fair lecturer's contempt for the prophet; for a similar effect see IV. 309 below' (Wallace). Hallam Tennyson asks, 'Does she allude to a report once popular that Mahomet denied that women have souls,

or had she heard that, according to the Mohammedan doctrine, hell was chiefly peopled with women?' Perhaps she had in mind no more than the fact that the Mohammedan civil law permits polygamy as well as divorce at the will of the husband.

144. **Verulam.** Lord Bacon. Cf. *The Palace of Art:*

> 'And there the Ionian father of the rest;
> A million wrinkles carved his skin;
> A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
> From cheek and throat and chin.
>
> . . . .
>
> And thro' the topmost Oriel's color'd flame
> Two godlike faces gazed below;
> Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
> The first of those who know.'

168–70. This is only one of many passages in the poem in which an ingenious irregularity of metre serves to bring out the meaning more sharply. For like effects, see IV. 370, 461; VII. 210 below.

* 180. **softer Adams.** Mr. Dawson interprets this as 'female founders.' Why not take it rather to be the simplest sort of ironical circumlocution for 'Eves,' and to refer in a vague way to the whole *personnel* of the college?

The airy flippancy of Florian's opening remark has to be atoned for by a deal of straight-faced wheedling.

177. **How saw you not,** etc. The answer to this question is given in I. 210 above.

224. **bestrode my Grandsire.** So Falstaff says: 'Hal, if thou see me down in the battle and bestride me, so; 'tis a point of friendship' (1 *Henry IV.*, Act V. Sc. i). See also *Comedy of Errors*, Act V. Sc. i.:

> 'When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took
> Deep scars to save thy life.'

* 260–1. The astute Cyril here touches the right note. The softening of Psyche is the first of those achievements the glory of which he is destined to share with the baby-heroine.

269. **secular.** The word is contrasted with 'fading' and 'mortal,' above, and is consequently used in its closely derivative meaning.

273. **O hard, when Love and Duty clash!** Tennyson has developed this thought at length in the poem *Love and Duty*.

319. **Danaïd.** See Smith's *Classical Dictionary*, under *Danaus*; or better, Brewer's *Reader's Handbook* under *Danaïds*.

* 373–411. This speech of Cyril's greatly excels in spirit and dramatic force anything we have found thus far. The allusions to the embarrassments of 'stomacher' and 'zone,' and the half-jesting madcap air of abandon, do not conceal the undercurrent of genuine feeling. The passage is worthy to be called Shakespearean.

420. **Astraean age.** Look this up under *Astraea*. See also Virgil, *Eclogues*, IV. 6:

> 'Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.'

* 439–42. **their May was passing,** etc. Some one has noted that here already the seeds of failure in the Princess's scheme are apparent. Without the direct interposition of the male element, failure must have been the result of an attempt essentially artificial.

* 444–5. **Melissa . . . gentle satire.** Keep this bit of description in mind, and note whether it is consistent with the other pictures of Melissa which are given in the course of the poem.

SONG.

dying moon. The third edition has 'dropping moon;' which do you prefer?

silver sails, etc. Notice how little the lack of grammatical connection between these two verses and the context affects the real feeling of the lyric.

PART III.

1–2. Cf. the following description in *Love and Duty*:

> 'Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
> Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl
> Far furrowing into light the mounded rack
> Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.'

5. **the Muses' heads.** See II. 13 above.

9. Shakespeare gives the adjective 'pale' the same substantive meaning of 'pallor' that *wan* has here.

16. **wont**; a word (like *canvass*, 24 below) which has an unusually interesting history.

35. **wholesale.** Mr. Dawson calls this 'a very odd use of a modern mercantile word.' It is certainly not a dictionary use, but a striking instance of the value of employing words with reference to their 'connotation.'

55. **They mounted, Ganymedes.** See *The Palace of Art*:

> '. . . Flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
> Half buried in the Eagle's down,
> Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
> Above the pillar'd town.'

56. **To tumble, Vulcans.** Be sure to read the famous description of the fall of Vulcan in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. I. 740–6. Both of these myths should be looked up in the classical reference-books.

68, 72, 75. **still.** Tennyson commonly gives this word the older meaning, 'continually;' the meaning in which it was used by Shakespeare and Milton.

74. 'If there be in the same room two stringed instruments, a note struck on a chord of one will cause the corresponding chord in the other to vibrate. The metaphor thus denotes complete unison of heart and mind between the two, causing any emotion or interest in the one to find an immediate sympathetic response in the other' (Wallace).

There is a similar use of 'shiver,' in *Morte d'Arthur*:

> 'A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars.'

* 75. For **yet my mother still,** etc., the first two editions read: 'only Lady Blanche;' a slip which is hardly needed, after lines 68–74 (in which it is obviously the poet himself who is speaking), to prove that Tennyson has lost sight of Melissa.

90. **clang . . . to the sphere**; call to the upper air. For this use of 'sphere,' compare Milton's: 'Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere.' (*Comus*, the song to Echo.)

100. Look up the myth of Memnon, preferably in Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*. See also *The Palace of Art*, 171.

106. **the innumerable rose.** Cf. V. 13 below.

108. '**Baluster,** accented on the penult; from French *balustre*, now corrupted into *bannister*' (Dawson).

111. **prime;** primeval. So Shakespeare speaks of 'the prime creation.' See note on II. 106 above.

120. **fabled nothing fair.** Contrast with another rare use of 'fair' in II. 305 above.

126. **limed;** a common word in Shakespeare and Milton. Look up its history.

* 131. Cyril has already **tried the mother's heart,** and with success, in his plea to Psyche; this time the ruse fails completely.

153. **take the dip of certain strata;** measure their inclination with respect to the horizon.

179. **retinue;** like 'revenue,' formerly accented on the second syllable. Here is an instance from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. V. 354–7:

> 'More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
> On princes, when their rich retinue long
> Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold
> Dazzles the crowd.'

* 203. **As girls were once.** Having expressed her extreme of contempt for the prince by calling him 'no better than a girl,' it suddenly occurs to her that this is a poor way of asserting the equality of woman with man, and she makes the best qualification she can at the moment. The passage is interesting because it suggests that the Princess all along instinctively held just the belief which is formulated by the Prince at the close of the poem. Her contempt for the man who is 'no better than a girl' implies not that she confesses the inferiority of her sex, but that Love's

> 'dearest bond is this,
> Not like to like, but like in difference.'

212–4. The student who is not familiar with the story of Vashti, should read the first chapter of the book of *Esther*.

215. **breathes full East.** 'The metaphor may have been *suggested* by the preceding reference to the proud and defiant Oriental queen, but is *derived* from the bitter and blasting character of the east wind' (Wallace).

* 228. **Love, children, happiness.** The Prince's suggestion of the domestic ideal prepares the way for our first glimpse of the amiable side of the Princess's character.

246. **POU STO.** It was Archimedes the mechanician who said, in praise of the lever: δός που στῶ, καὶ κόσμον κινήσω. — 'Give me *a place to stand on*, and I will pry the world.'

269–70. **against the pikes . . . down the fiery gulf.** These two expressions, according to Mr. Wallace's conjecture, were not used vaguely: 'They were probably suggested by two legends of ancient Rome: — (1) In the Latin War (B.C. 340) Publius Decius Mus, one of the Roman generals, sacrificed himself on the spears of the enemy in order to secure the victory to his army, it having been revealed to him in a vision from Heaven that one army was doomed and the general of the other (a somewhat similar act of devotion is recorded of Arnold von Winkelried in the battle of Sempach, 1388, during the Swiss struggle for independence against the Austrians; this hero, seeing that the Austrian line of spears was impregnable, gathered into his breast as many as he could, and falling upon them created a gap into which his comrades poured); (2) A chasm having appeared in the market-place of Rome, and the priests having declared that this would not close up until there had been cast into it the chief element of Rome's greatness, a young noble named Marcus Curtius, thinking that this condition would best be fulfilled by the sacrifice of one of her sons, leapt into it on horseback and in full armor (B.C. 362).'

280. **Dare we dream,** etc.: Dare we dream that the Creator is a mere craftsman, to improve in skill by practice?

* 282–7. The enthusiasm of the Princess for the study of metaphysics is merged for the moment in a pretty-womanly fondness for the golden trinket prize, and in childlike complacency over the aptness of the device.

286. **Diotima.** There is a good note on this name in Brewer's *Reader's Handbook.*

288. **schools.** The courses of instruction in English University parlance are 'schools.'

311. **make one act the phantom of succession;** fancifully consider the single process of creation as if it were a series of acts.

324. **Elysian lawns . . . built to the sun.** In disclaiming a fancied reference here to the towers of Troy, Tennyson wrote, 'The "Elysian lawns" are the lawns of Elysium, and have nothing to do with Troy — or perhaps they refer rather to the Islands of the Blest (Pindar, Olympia, 2d).'

The passage to which he refers may be rendered freely:

> 'There round the Islands of the Blest
> The sea-born airs do breathe. There golden blooms
> Of summer glow, some from the hardy breast
> Of earth, on glorious boughs, some in the glooms
> Of silent waters: — these they twine
> In wreaths to deck their hands divine.'

334. **The bearded Victor,** etc. It seems probable that Pindar's defeat was not an altogether inglorious one: 'Now of Corinna, the only woman who ever wrote poetry in Tanagra, there is a statue in an open place in the city, and in the gymnasium there is a picture showing her with the fillet round her hair which she won at Thebes, when she overcame Pindar in singing; and I think she got the victory partly because she sang not as Pindar did in the Dorian dialect, but so that the Æolians could more easily understand her, and chiefly because she must have been the most beautiful woman of her day, if one may judge from the portrait.' — *Pausanias*, ix. 22. 3.

SONG.

* This song, it is supposed, was inspired by the bugle-music of the boatmen at Lake Killarney. The first peal of the notes is loud and triumphant. The poet's mind is carried back by the martial sound and the distant sight of the ruined walls of Killarney Castle, to the far dim mediæval past. The impression is intense, but fades quickly as the warlike strain dies away. The echoes now suggest the silver tinkle of elfin horns, and for a moment the eerie charm of fairyland holds the listener. These too die, and with the silence comes the swift lyric turn from the visions of exhausted feudalism and of fruitless superstition to the clear certain life of the present and of the future. That life is to bring the gradual union of his nature with that of his beloved; to be full of the gentle enduring influences which, like echoes, 'roll from soul to soul,' but, unlike echoes, 'grow forever and forever.'

PART IV.

2. **that hypothesis;** the 'nebular hypothesis' which has been already summarized by Lady Psyche.

17. **gold.** Rolfe remarks, 'Of course gold is an adjective refer-

ring to wine;' while Wallace says: '*gold*, i.e. golden goblets and other vessels.' Which meaning seems to you the more probable?

21–40. 'The idea of this lyric had been resting in the poet's mind since 1831. Then at the age of twenty-two he published in *The Gem*, one of the annuals at that time in fashion, the following poem omitted from all the recent editions of his works:

> O sad *No more!* O sweet *No more!*
> O strange *No more!*
> By a mossed brookbank on a stone
> I smelt a wildwood flower alone;
> There was a ringing in my ears,
> And both my eyes gushed out with tears,
> Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
> Low-buried fathom-deep beneath with thee,
> *No more!*

The melancholy melody of the refrain 'No more,' has evidently haunted the poet's mind, and he has taken the poem which he justly suppressed as unworthy of him, and after long years reproduced it in this glorified form' (Dawson).

'One of my family remembers,' writes Mrs. Ritchie, 'hearing Tennyson say that "Tears, idle tears" was suggested by Tintern Abbey: who shall say by what mysterious wonder of beauty and regret, by what sense of the "transient with the abiding"?'

47. **cram our ears,** as Odysseus did (*Odyssey*, Bk. VI).

60. **beard-blown.** See Appendix I.

61. **hang on the shaft.** Keep his doubtful footing on some ruined column.

69. **a death's head at the wine.** The allusion is to the fabled Egyptian practice of carrying round the circle of feasters a death's head or a coffin, by way of pointing the moral 'Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow ye die.'

97. **Fly to her and pipe and woo her.** Professor Hadley has cited this as an illustration of Tennyson's habit of 'blending a final vowel with an initial weak consonant easily elided in pronunciation.' For a similar effect, see 81 above.

* This lyric and the 'Tears, idle tears' are the best of Tennyson's imitations of the 'isometric songs' of Theocritus; songs which, retaining the metrical form of the surrounding narrative, triumph

through sheer perfection of rhythmic feeling, so that the ear hardly notices even the absence of rhyme.

100. **Like the Ithacensian suitors.** Mr. Dawson says: 'The suitors at the court of Penelope feel the occult influence of the unseen goddess Pallas causing their thoughts to wander. They fail to recognize Ulysses in his disguise, and their laughter is constrained and unnatural, they know not why. They **laugh with alien lips,** which is the nearest possible poetical translation of the Greek idiomatic expression, "They laughed with other men's jaws"' (οἱ δ' ἤδη γναθμοῖσι γελῴων ἀλλοτρίοισιν, *Odyssey*, Bk. XX. 347).

104. **Bulbul.** 'The Persian name of the nightingale, whose love for the rose is a favorite theme with Saadi and his brother poets. **Gulistan** is Persian for rose-garden, and Saadi takes it as the title of his book of poems' (Rolfe).

Note in this passage the use of the contemptuous 'thee.'

121. **Valkyrian.** The Valkyrs ('choosers of the slain'), according to the Northern Mythology, were warrior-maidens who presided over the field of battle, and carried slain heroes to Valhalla, the 'palace of immortal delight.' The Princess's ideal of poetry is evidently typified in her song of triumph (VI. 17–42 below).

130. **owed.** What is the meaning in this connection?

131. **to leaven play with profit.** Recreation does not mean idleness to this woman-scholar. Here she hopes for the musical rendering of some bit of folk-lore — anthropographical data, she might have said, — but is hardly prepared for the 'local color' of Cyril's 'careless, careless tavern-catch.'

* 148–52. The flight of the Princess is probably due rather to an impulse to avoid the contamination of the male presence, than to actual fear. It is perhaps a little odd that the Head should not have caused the intenders to be arrested at this moment. Surely she could not have gone upon this expedition without a guard of some sort. — Is Melissa warning the men or the women to 'flee the death'?

* 159. **she miss'd the plank.** The poet has plenty of authority for pitching his heroine into the river at this juncture. Obviously, according to the established canons of romance, the rescue of the Princess is now in order. Only in this way, indeed, can the incident of Cyril's song be turned from catastrophe into crisis, and the Prince be restored to a working chance of gaining her favor.

160. **from glow to gloom.** The evening glow from the West

still touched the bridge, while the channel beneath was in darkness. 'Glow to gloom' reminds us of Browning's favorite contrast of 'shade and shine.'

162. **the horrible fall.** See III. 273 above.

162–7. 'Notice how the broken movement of these lines, the short sharp sentences, the irregular metre, and the harsh dominance of monosyllables, accentuate the strain, the struggle, and the anxiety of the action narrated' (Dawson).

163. **woman-vested as I was, plunged.** This is a rather evident reminiscence of Cassius's

> 'Accoutred as I was, I plunged in.'
>
> *Julius Cæsar*, Act I. Sc. ii.

An even closer parallel metrically is to be found in V. 472–3 below.

166. **The weight of all the hopes,** etc. A similar passage has been noted in the Roman poet Statius, in which the baby Apollo is pictured as crawling along the edge of Delos, and by the weight of his divinity actually *tipping* the island.

185. **the hunter;** Actæon. Look up the myth, if you are not familiar with it.

195. **Thro' a great arc.** The constellation of the Great Bear (also known as the Great Dipper and Charles's Wain) does not set, but describes an arc about the North Star, fading only with the dawn.

200. **out of rules.** See Appendix II.

* 203. **a moral leper, I.** The sensitive Florian is blameless himself, yet he feels the taint of Cyril's coarseness. This, with his lack of the Prince's saving sense of humor and his anxiety for the welfare of Psyche and Melissa, leads him to take a tragic view of the situation.

207. **Judith . . . Holofernes.** See Brewer's *Reader's Handbook,* or better, the apocryphal book of *Judith.*

217–20. Alas, for our budding admiration for the Princess. The spectacle of her unwomanly, not to say vulgar, fury, which turns itself, for lack of some more responsible victim, against the baby-heroine, is hard to forget.

236. **as the water-lily,** etc. A similar use of this figure has been noted in Wordsworth, *The Excursion,* Bk. V.:

> 'a thing
> Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
> And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
> Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
> Floats on the tossing waves'

In commenting on the parallel, Mr. Dawson said, 'Wordsworth's is the more familiar picture.' This called forth the remark by Tennyson in Appendix I.

* 241. **He, standing still, was clutched.** The solemn Florian surrenders without a thought of escape: but the Prince is seized by a sudden whimsical impulse, not so much to get away, as to 'breathe the Proctors' a little.

242. **musky-circled.** Cf. Milton, *Comus:*

> 'And west winds with musky wing
> About the cedarn alleys fling
> Nard and cassia's balmy smells.'

255. **the mystic fire,** etc. Cf. Longfellow, *The Golden Legend:*

> 'Last night I saw St. Elmo's stars,
> With their glimmering lanterns, all at play
> On the tops of the masts and the tips of the spars,
> And I knew we should have foul weather to-day.'

* 257. **Bow'd toward her, combing,** etc. The impressiveness of the royal audience must have been somewhat marred by this process of the toilet. The succeeding description of the 'eight daughters of the plow,' on the other hand, is quite in keeping with the idea of judicial grandeur.

* 266–8. Again there is the unpleasant suggestion of wilful maltreatment of the innocent child. It must be noted, however, that her presence is dramatically necessary to the scene.

275. **Castalies;** sources of culture. See classical reference-books under *Castalia.*

296. **Jonah's gourd.** See, if necessary, *Jonah,* iv.

311. **grace.** Look up the history and the many interesting meanings of this word (and of *use,* 317 below).

338. **real;** a dissyllable here, as it is commonly in Shakespeare.

* 340–3. The Princess is admirable in her summary dismissal of Lady Blanche. She shows perfect self-command, and a really royal

dignity of decision. But as for her adoption of the child — what shall we say was her principal motive: a mere feeling of compassion for the deserted baby, a natural longing for child-companionship, or a settled purpose to establish by her complaisance a permanent right to Psyche's little daughter, and so to attain her subtlest revenge upon Psyche herself?

352. **Niobean.** Look this up in some classical dictionary under *Niobe.*

366–7. **When the wild peasant,** etc. 'Referring to the incendiary fires so common in the trouble with the English agricultural laborers some years before the poem was written' (Rolfe).

370. Note how closely the irregularity of the metre corresponds with the vehemence of the Princess's mood.

* 404–48. This gallant outburst of the Prince contains some real eloquence of the young-lover sort, with a touch of obsequiousness here and there which is not inexcusable under the circumstances.

418. **Sphered up,** etc. Milton in a similar phrase calls Cassiopëia 'that *starred* Ethiop queen' (*Il Penseroso,* 19).

422. **frequence.** Cf. Milton, *Paradise Regained,* Bk. I. 128–9:

> ' . . . The Most High . . . in full frequence bright
> Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.'

426. **landskip.** This is the older form of the word. The ending 'skip' is a variant of 'ship' (as in town*ship*); the word means properly, therefore, a tract of land.

427. **The dwarfs of presage.** Cf. 'less than fame,' I. 72 above.

* 454–68. 'It must be borne in mind,' says Mr. Wallace, 'that this scene took place after midnight. The Princess is sitting in judgment in the Hall, but the greater number of the girls are outside in the quadrangle, which is illuminated by the lights of the Hall streaming through the windows.'

461. **Fluctuated,** etc. This verse, which seems at first to be a hexameter, may be read with only five accented syllables by throwing the second accent upon 'flowers':

> Flúctuated as flówers in stórm, some réd, some pále.

For the accentuation of 'fluctuated,' see note on Prologue, 90 above.

523. **should lord you.** Shakespeare has a much more startling figure, in *Coriolanus,* Act V. Sc. iii.:

'This old man
Loved me above the measure of a father,
Nay, *godded* me, indeed.'

531–2. See note on 166 above.

INTERLUDE.

SONG.

* Mark what a rousing note of straightforward energy Lilia puts into the little song; which points the transition from the foregoing 'raillery or grotesque or false sublime' to a genuine seriousness of motive and depth of feeling in the subsequent narrative.

An earlier version was this:

'Lady, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands,
Now thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.'

Why is the present form better?

This interlude was one of the many improvements which appeared in the third edition of the poem. Like most of the other additions, it was inserted for the purpose of bringing out more clearly the serious meaning of the work, which the public had failed to find in the original version. From this time on the forces of the poem converge steadily toward the final triumph of wedded love. The interest becomes more and more centred in the two principal characters; they show less and less of weak whimsy and false ambition, and the scene of their final union is so perfect in its feeling that we fairly forget the burlesque and strain of the earlier episodes.

PART V.

2. **a stationary voice.** For the meaning of 'stationary' Mr. Dawson refers us to the post-classical Latin *stationarii milites*, and the French *soldats stationnaires*.

* 4. **'The second two.'** Who were the first two, and how long before had they probably passed the sentries?

13. **the innumerous leaf.** Cf. Milton, *Comus:*

'In the close dungeon of innumerous boughs.'

21. **the gilded Squire.** Evidently Tennyson attributes to this type the same characteristics as are to be found in Chaucer's description of the 'yong Squyer,' in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales.*

25. **mawkin.** This word is used by Shakespeare in such phrases as 'the swineherd's malkin,' 'the kitchen malkin,' etc. Be sure to look up its derivation.

37. **transient;** used here participially, with the exact meaning of the Latin *transiens.*

42. **And hit the northern hills;** a startling conclusion to a somewhat violent, but notably suggestive, figure of speech.

46. **Amazed;** an older use of the word: bewildered, like one in a maze.

74. **Why kept ye not your faith?** See II. 275–80 above.

* 77. **for your child.** Here again Cyril connects himself somewhat cunningly with the mother's thought of her child.

* 79–102. One almost regrets that the mother's feeling did not express itself in the lyric form (the two opening lines suggest such a treatment), rather than in the present quasi-dramatic fashion.

93–96. For a strikingly similar passage, see Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night,* Act I. Sc. v. 287–95.

121. **the trampled year;** a figurative use somewhat like that of 'clime and age,' Prologue, 16 above.

125. **lightens scorn.** Cf. II. 117 above.

131–2. **dash'd your cities,** etc. Line 133 in the first two editions read, 'And dusted down your domes with mangonels.' Do you see any reason for the poet's discarding it in later editions?

162. **a cherry net.** 'Fruit trees in England are commonly protected by light nets against the depredations of birds' (Wallace).

181–4. **truer to the law within.** Cf. *In Memoriam,* **xxxiii.**:

'Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good:
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.'

188. **pure as lines of green.** Rolfe notes that this is 'another illustration of the poet's keen observation of nature. Most writers would have taken the white of the snowdrop as the emblem of purity (as Tennyson himself does in *St. Agnes*, 11), but that delicate green seems more exquisitely pure, even beside the white.'

190. What is the force of **piebald** here?

231. **oozed.** There is a similar use of the word in *Sea Dreams:*

'And then began to bloat himself and ooze
All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean.'

250. **the airy Giant;** Orion. Look up the myth in the classical reference-books. The constellation is one of the most easily identified in the winter heavens, on account of the prominence of the 'three stars' which form the 'zone.' What is the force of 'airy' in this passage?

252–4. Much the same figure is used in Homer, *Iliad*, Bk. V. 5. The passage is rendered by Lord Derby as follows:

'Forth from his helm and shield a fiery light
There flash'd, like Autumn's Star, that brightest shines
When newly risen from his ocean bath.'

The phrase **wash'd with morning** finds also a parallel in Browning, *Old Pictures in Florence:*

'Washed by the morning water-gold
Florence lay out on the mountain-side,

River and bridge and street and square
Lay mine, as much at my beck and call
Thro' the live translucent bath of air
As the sights in a magic crystal ball.'

284. **St. something.** 'St. Catherine of Alexandria, the Catherine usually painted with a wheel, or with a book, or disputing with philosophers. The patron saint of philosophy, the daughter of King

Costis. Costis married Sabinella, Queen of Egypt, and on her death Catherine became Queen. She devoted herself to learning, and would not marry, but was espoused in a vision to Jesus Christ. [Emperor] Maxentius sent fifty of the wisest philosophers to convert her, but she converted them. Unable to kill her with the wheel, Maxentius cut off her head, and the angels carried her body to heaven' (Dawson).

325. Strangely enough, **life** here has precisely the meaning of 'death' in 157 above.

332. **They made him wild;** a touch of oddly colloquial humor.

355. **Tomyris.** Herodotus tells the story of Tomyris, Queen of the Massagetæ. When she heard that Cyrus was meditating an expedition into her territories, she sent him a formal remonstrance. 'Having solemnly warned him to desist, she at last gave him battle. He was slain on the field, and she then took his head and dipping it in a skin of blood bade him, since he was so bloodthirsty, drink his fill therefrom' (Wallace).

358. **the lists were hammer'd up.** The manner of arranging the lists is described fully in the eighth chapter of Scott's *Ivanhoe*.

367–373. The presentation by the bride of a whip to her future husband is an old Russian custom. The allusions which follow are of course to the Hindoo customs of burning widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands, and of casting female children into the Ganges (as things of no use, perhaps, rather than as objects of 'prophetic pity').

382. **gallant institutes;** fine regulations.

412. **orbs;** forms a part of the orb of the earth.

*414. This womanish postscript to a sounding peroration recalls the whimsical episode of the prize brooch.

419. **mellay;** an Anglicized form of the French *mêlée*.

500. **Miriam . . . Jael.** See *Exodus*, xv.; *Judges*, iv.

SONG.

* In 1865 Tennyson published another version of the song:

'Home they brought him slain with spears,
They brought him home at even fall;
All alone she sits and hears
Echoes in the empty hall,
Sounding on the morrow.

The sun peeped in from open field,
The boy began to leap and prance,
Rode upon his father's lance,
Beat upon his father's shield:
Oh hush, my joy, my sorrow.'

'The new rendering,' says Mr. Waugh, 'has a charm of its own from a certain allusiveness and vagueness of suggestion which are more artistic than the fullest detail. The removal of the face-cloth and the strategy of the nurse are unrecorded. Only, the child plays with his father's lance and shield, and in his game reminds her of her loss. Then with an outburst of grief she reproves him:

"Oh hush, my joy, my sorrow!"

There is a suddenness of pathos here which is irresistible. This version was many years afterward published with a musical setting by Lady Tennyson.'

Mr. Dawson calls the song an 'unconscious imitation' of a passage in Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto I. It is probably a safer criticism to call it an interesting parallel.

PART VI.

16. **that great dame of Lapidoth;** Deborah. See *Judges*, iv. and v.

47. **Blanch'd.** Compare the employment of the word here with the use of the Latin *albus* in the sense of propitious.

48. **the golden year.** One of Tennyson's dominant thoughts is expressed in the poem called *The Golden Year:*

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun:
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse,
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

. . . .

But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'

62–3. **by them went the enamor'd air,** etc. This is another purely Elizabethan conceit.

65. **tremulous isles of light.** See Appendix I.

69. **timorously.** 'The word occupies in the metre of the line the place of one foot only, the resolution of which into four short syllables that must be hurriedly pronounced indicates the timidity and nervousness with which the girls approach the ghastly scene' (Wallace).

126. **on tremble;** atremble. Remember that the prefix a- in such words as 'asleep,' 'afoot,' 'aboard,' 'alive,' is merely a contraction of 'on.'

129–30. **hollow watch . . . Red grief.** Notice how powerfully the meaning is condensed in these figurative touches.

186. **in the dead prime.** Cf. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I. Sc. ii:

> 'In the dead waste and middle of the night.'

234–9. There are in Shakespeare two similar descriptions of close friendship between women: in *As You Like It*, Act I. Sc. iii; and in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act III. Sc. ii.

* 266–77. Previous to this scene what strength the Princess possessed has seemed to be of a masculine sort. From this point on her natural strength of womanly sweetness and nobility becomes more and more evident, as the hard aggressiveness and self-confidence gradually fade from view.

287–90. Still another flawless bit of Elizabethan workmanship.

* 314–22. In the early editions this speech was about four times as long as in its present form, and contained much of the rhetoric which the reader has long ago learned to expect from her Highness. The final version is far superior in compactness, dignity, and dramatic power.

319. **The Pharos.** This was a famous lighthouse built on the island of Pharos, near Alexandria, by Ptolemy Philadelphus (about 250 B.C.).

338. In heraldry the **supporters** are the figures which flank the central shield of a coat of arms; as, for example, in the arms of Great Britain.

355. **due.** Cf. IV. 123 above.

* 361. **those held sagest.** Note that in the event their wisdom

turns out to be of the sort which is celebrated in the following song.

SONG.

* 'Notice the predominance in this song of monosyllables,' says Mr. Wallace. 'Of the 125 words which it contains, only seven have more than one syllable, and these only two. This feature imparts a peculiar stateliness to the composition, emphasizing the solemnity of its tone without impairing its melody. . . . This peculiar mournful and reserved tone is strikingly noticeable in such of Shakespeare's sonnets as are constructed after the monosyllabic type.'

No critical comment seems necessary upon this perfect lyric of absolute womanly surrender.

PART VII.

* 19. **void was her use.** Cf. *Aylmer's Field:*

> 'the gentle creature shut from all
> Her charitable use.'

This, like most genuinely poetic expressions, loses force in proportion as it gains explicitness, when it is turned into prose. Her life was empty of its usual occupations, and she had as yet found nothing to take their place. Her being was already stirred by the inward pleading of emotions which she had abjured; but she had no thought, as yet, of laying aside her practical aims.

21. **sees a great black cloud,** etc. See Appendix I.

81–97. Of these seventeen verses only three do not begin with 'And.' What is the effect of this monotonous structure?

98. **flourished up.** Look up the literal meaning of 'flourish,' and cf. II. 292 above.

100–1. In the opinion of the present editor, this is by far the most beautiful simile in the poem.

108–11. **The Oppian law,** enacted when Hannibal was approaching the gates of Rome, ordered that women should not wear bright-colored robes, or own more than half an ounce of gold ornaments, or drive in or near Rome. When the war was finished, and the necessity for economy no longer pressing, the women demanded that the law be repealed. One of the two consuls agreed, but Cato refused,

whereupon 'the women rose, thronged the streets and forum, and harassed the magistrates until the law was repealed.'

112. **Hortensia,** daughter of the orator Hortensius, spoke successfully against a tax which had been imposed by the triumvirate which succeeded Julius Cæsar, upon the wealthy Roman matrons.

* 120— From this point until the end, as the narrative changes to what may be called a series of monologues, — always a favorite mode of expression with Tennyson, — we find a more even excellence than in any other portion of the main poem.

147–8. **mood;** spirit: **mould;** physical form: **that other;** Aphrodite. If you are not familiar with the story of the birth of Aphrodite, look it up in the classical reference-books.

189. **horns;** Alpine peaks. Cf. Matter*horn*. Explain the expression 'walk with Death and Morning.'

205–7. A bewilderingly melodious passage, whose technical merit equals that of Keats at his best.

198. **water-smoke.** So Tennyson writes, in *The Lotos-Eaters:*

> 'And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
> Along the cliff to pause and fall did seem.'

199. **like a broken purpose.** 'To illustrate the material by the immaterial is rare in figurative language' (Rolfe).

229. **the Signs.** Consult a dictionary under *Zodiac.*

245. **out of Lethe;** here, simply 'out of oblivion,' i.e., from the moment of birth.

* 248. **Stays all the fair young planet,** etc.: Woman, the poet says, holds the fate of this still childish, but gradually developing world of men.

* 259–79. In these lines the fallacy, not narrowly of the 'woman's rights' doctrine, but in a broad sense of all efforts to ignore or annul the difference in natural endowment of man and woman, is clearly exposed.

295. **besotted in sweet self;** a phrase which comes dangerously near the affectation of which Tennyson has been so often accused.

301–8. Cf. Wordsworth, 'She was a phantom of delight':

> 'A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, to command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.'

311. **comes easy**; an odd colloquialism to find in so serious a context.

EPILOGUE.

24. **realists.** The use of the word here is quite different from that which it commonly has with us; the meaning is clear, however, from the connection.

64. **our own,** i.e., 'the fantastic serio-comic tale we have just been telling.'

73–4. **maybe wildest dreams are but the needful preludes,** etc. Cf. *Love and Duty:*

'Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law,
System, and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?'

76–7. **This fine old world,** etc. The poet's prophecy of better times to come has already been quoted in the note on VI. 48 above.

87. **pine**; pineapples.

APPENDIX I.

[This letter was written by Tennyson to Mr. S. E. Dawson, soon after the publication of Mr. Dawson's monograph, '*A Study of The Princess.*' This 'excellent little book,' says Dr. Van Dyke, 'was the occasion of drawing from Tennyson a letter, which seems to me one of the most valuable, as it is certainly one of the longest, pieces of prose that he has ever given to the public.']

ALDWORTH, HASLEMERE,
SURREY, *Nov.* 21st, 1882.

DEAR SIR, — I thank you for your able and thoughtful essay on *The Princess*. You have seen, amongst other things, that if women ever were to play such freaks the burlesque and the tragic might go hand-in-hand.

I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem — again, I thought, the poem will explain itself, but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them. You would be still more certain that the child was the true heroine if, instead of the first song as it now stands,

'As thro' the land at eve we went'

I had printed the first song which I wrote,

The losing of the child.

The child is sitting on the bank of a river, and playing with flowers — a flood comes down — a dam has been broken thro' — the child is borne down by the flood — the whole village dis-

tracted — after a time the flood has subsided — the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank and all the women are in raptures. I quite forget the words of the ballad, but I think I may have it somewhere.

Your explanatory notes are very much to the purpose, and I do not object to your finding parallelisms. They must always recur. A man (a Chinese scholar) some time ago wrote to me saying that in an unknown, untranslated Chinese poem there were two whole lines of mine, almost word for word. Why not? are not human eyes all over the world looking at the same objects, and must there not consequently be coincidences of thought and impressions and expressions? It is scarcely possible for any one to say or write anything in this late time of the world to which, in the rest of the literature of the world, a parallel could not somewhere be found. But when you say that this passage or that was suggested by Wordsworth or Shelley or another, I demur, and more, I wholly disagree. There was a period in my life when, as an artist, Turner for instance, takes rough sketches of landskip, &c., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in nature. I never put these down, and many and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e.g.*:

'A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight.'

Suggestion:

The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England, tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon was behind it.

'A great black cloud
Drag inward from the deep.'

Suggestion:

A coming storm seen from the top of Snowdon. In the Idyls of the King

'with all
Its stormy crests that smote against the skies.'

Suggestion:

A storm which came upon us in the middle of the North Sea.

'As the water-lily starts and slides.'

Suggestion:

Water-lilies in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind, till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks — quite as *true* as Wordsworth's simile and more in detail.

'A wild wind shook —
follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Suggestion:

I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and —

'Shake the songs the whispers and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.'

The wind, I believe, was a west-wind but, because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south and, naturally, the wind said 'follow.' I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho', of course, if they occur in the Prometheus, I must have read them.

I could multiply instances, but I will not bore you, and far indeed am I from asserting that books, as well as nature, are not, and ought not to be, suggestive to the poet. I am sure that I myself, and many others, find a peculiar charm in those passages of such great masters as Virgil or Milton where they adopt the creation of a bye-gone poet, and re-clothe it, more or less, according to their own fancy. But there is, I fear, a prosaic set growing up among us, editors of booklets, bookworms, index-hunters, or men of great memories and no imagination, who *impute themselves* to the poet, and so believe that *he*, too, has no

imagination, but is forever poking his nose between the pages of some old volume in order to see what he can appropriate. They will not allow one to say 'Ring the bells,' without finding that we have taken it from Sir P. Sydney — or even to use such a simple expression as the ocean 'roars' without finding out the precise verse in Homer or Horace from which we have plagiarised it (fact!).

I have known an old fish-wife, who had lost two sons at sea, clench her fist at the advancing tide on a stormy day and cry out — 'Ay! roar, do! how I hates to see thee show thy white teeth!' Now if I had adopted her exclamation and put it into the mouth of some old woman in one of my poems, I daresay the critics would have thought it original enough, but would most likely have advised me to go to Nature for my old women and not to my own imagination; and indeed it is a strong figure.

Here is another little anecdote about suggestion. When I was about twenty or twenty-one I went on a tour to the Pyrenees. Lying among these mountains before a waterfall that comes down one thousand or twelve hundred feet I sketched it (according to my custom then) in these words —

'Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn.'

When I printed this a critic informed me that 'lawn' was the material used in theatres to imitate a waterfall, and graciously added 'Mr. T. should not go to the boards of a theatre but to Nature herself for his suggestions.' — And I *had* gone to Nature herself.

I think it is a moot point whether — if I had known how that effect was produced on the stage — I should have ventured to publish the line.

I find that I have written, quite contrary to my custom, a letter, when I had merely intended to thank you for your interesting commentary.

Thanking you again for it, I beg you to believe me

Very faithfully yours,

A. TENNYSON.

P.S. By-the-bye, you are wrong about 'the tremulous isles of light': they are 'isles of light,' spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to the other, as the procession of girls 'moves under *shade*.'

And surely the 'beard-blown' goat involves a sense of the wind blowing the beard on the height of the ruined pillar.

APPENDIX II.

[The following facts about Cambridge University and her colleges will serve to explain several allusions in the Prologue, as well as many hints in the body of the narrative as to the constitution of the Princess's establishment. They are taken from 'The Student's Guide to the University of Cambridge' (GEO. BELL, London, 1880].

THE Colleges are foundations established and endowed at different times by private munificence to secure a studious leisure to learned men, and education to the young. They are of later date than the University itself, but have in process of time grown into an intimate union with it. For a considerable time it was impossible to be a student of the University without being a member of some College. . . . At present every Undergraduate is admitted either as the member of some College, or as a Non-Collegiate student. The colleges are seventeen in number, and differ from each other in innumerable details. . . . Every College has a Head, who is generally called Master, but sometimes Provost or President. The student has few personal dealings with him. He performs the ceremony of scholarships and fellowships, and grave cases of misconduct are referred to him. Then come the body of Fellows, out of whom and by whom the Master is, in most cases, chosen. These are graduates of the University in receipt of annuities arising from the founder's bequest, and in possession of other privileges defined by statutes. . . .

The Fellows with the Master constitute the governing body in most Colleges, though in some the work is in the hands of a section of this body. But the superintendent of the work of education in the College, and the authority to whom the students look

up, is the Tutor. There is one or more of such officers in every College, and in addition to the duty of lecturing in the College, which he commonly shares with others, the Tutor's function is to maintain discipline and control over all within the College who are *in statu pupillari*. The Tutor is generally a Fellow, and to aid in the work of instruction other Fellows or other graduates are generally appointed with the title of Assistant Tutors, whose business it is to lecture and enforce attendance at their own lectures, and possibly in some degree to concern themselves with the general discipline of the Undergraduates. Besides holding authority, the Tutor is a guardian and adviser to the Undergraduates, and it is to him that the student should go in any difficulty that may arise.

Besides the Tutors, Deans are appointed from the number of the Fellows, who are charged to provide for the celebration of Divine Service daily in the College Chapel, and in some cases to enforce the attendance of the students. In the more important colleges, the Deans also share with the Tutors the general supervision of the conduct of the students, especially in taking care that proper hours are observed for returning home at night. . . . The University [by way of supplement to the discipline of the several colleges] maintains discipline among its students, i.e., among all its members below the degree of Master in some faculty, by means of Proctors. These officers are two in number, annually elected, Masters of Arts or Laws, of three years' standing at the least, or Bachelors of Divinity. It is part of their duty to watch over the behavior of the students, and, to assist them in this, four Pro-proctors are annually appointed. They inflict fines on those students whom they find abroad after dark without cap and gown, and for graver offences they can inflict graver penalties. They are attended by servants, who act as a kind of University Police. Every Undergraduate or Bachelor is bound to state to the Proctor or Pro-proctor, when called upon, his name and College. The penalties inflicted at Cambridge are fines, confinement within the lodging-house or within the walls of the

College in the evening, rustication (dismissal from the University for one or more terms or part of a term, which of course entails a prolongation of the time of undergraduateship), and expulsion from the University. . . .

The Undergraduates of a college may be divided into the classes of Scholars, Pensioners, Fellow-commoners and Sizars. Noblemen may enter as a separate class, but few, if any, do so; and the class of Fellow-commoners is no longer an important one.

The *Scholars* are students who receive an annuity from the College, and enjoy besides certain exemptions varying at the different Colleges. Scholarships are given in reward of merit, and it is the first ambition of a student to win this distinction. . . . The ordinary student of a College, who pays for everything, and enjoys no exemptions, is called a *Pensioner*, i.e., a boarder. *Sizarships* consist of certain emoluments and exemptions given to students in consideration of poverty as well as merit. The *Sizar* must of course occupy a position of inferiority, as one avowedly poor in the company of richer men; but on the other hand the very avowal of his poverty secures him from many temptations.

The duties commonly exacted by a College from its students are attendance at Chapel and at lectures, and at the dinner in the College Hall. At some Colleges those who do not attend Chapel regularly will receive warnings from the Dean, and after repeated warnings will be in danger of punishment, i.e., being deprived of the liberty of passing the College gates, or the outer door of lodgings, during some hours before they are closed for the rest of the students. . . . There is a public dinner in the hall of every College every day. Grace before meat is read commonly by the Scholars, and after meat by Scholars or the senior Fellow present.

. . . Some persons prefer lodgings to rooms in College. They have one practical advantage, viz., that in them, as in lodging-houses anywhere else, the servants can be summoned at any

time, whereas in College rooms there are no bells, and the servants, who go by the names of *gyps* and *bedmakers*, are not constantly on the staircase, but make their rounds at fixed hours. On the other hand, so far from there being greater liberty in lodgings, as might be supposed, there is somewhat less, for the lock, which the lodging-house keeper is bound to turn at nine or ten o'clock, confines you to the house itself, whereas the closing of the College gate at the same hour leaves to those within liberty to range the whole College.

Among the first and most indispensable steps to be taken after entering, is the purchasing of a cap and gown. Each College has its own pattern for the gown worn by its Undergraduates; for Non-Collegiate students also a distinct pattern is prescribed. The proper gown, with the cap, will be furnished by the University tailor. The cap and gown constitute the academic dress, and are to be used on all occasions when a student acts in the character of a member of the University or College; on all public occasions, . . . at all University or College lectures, at the public dinner in the College Hall, and generally at the College Chapel. At Chapel, instead of the gown, a surplice is worn on Sunday, on Saturday evening, on all Saints' days, and at the evening service of the day before every Saint's day. For the sake of discipline, the cap and gown are required to be worn by all students appearing in the streets in the evening, and throughout the whole of Sunday. These rules are strictly maintained.

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